

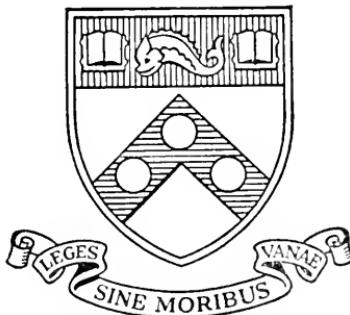
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VOLUME XLI · 1977

CONTENTS

Poe the Craftsman: The Changing Fiction	
Introduction: Poe and the Art of the Well Wrought Tale BENJAMIN FRANKLIN FISHER IV	5
Edgar Allan Poe's <i>Tales of the Folio Club</i> : The Evolution of a Lost Book ALEXANDER HAMMOND	13
Poe's "Diabolical" Humor: Revisions in "Bon-Bon" JAMES W. CHRISTIE	44
The Power of Words in Poe's "Silence" BENJAMIN FRANKLIN FISHER IV	56
What William Wilson Knew: Poe's Dramatization of an Errant Mind MARC LESLIE ROVNER	73
A Telling Tale: Poe's Revisions in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" JOEL KENNETH ASARCH	83
Poe's Revisions of "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt"—A Hoax? RICHARD FUSCO	91

Sixteenth-Century Imprints in the University Libraries: 140 Additions M. A. SHAABER	103
Piccolo, Ma Con Gran Vagghezza: A New Source for <i>Hamlet</i> ? THERESA SURIANO ORMSBY-LENNON	119
“Merry Passages and Jeasts” and Sir Nicholas L’Estrange H. F. LIPPINCOTT	149
Simms’s Early Short Stories MARY ANN WIMSATT	163
S. Weir Mitchell and the Germination of a Poem JAMES M. GIBSON	180
The Elusive <i>Visions d’Oger le Dannoys</i> JUDITH M. DAVIS	186
Index to Volumes XXXI-XL	189

THE LIBRARY CHRONICLE

Vol. XLI Spring, 1976 No. 1

Poe the Craftsman: The Changing Fiction

EDITED BY

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN FISHER IV

Essays in Honor of Richard P. Benton
and Maureen Cobb Mabbott

Friends of the Library

UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
PHILADELPHIA
1976

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Edgar Allan Poe's <i>Tales of the Folio Club</i> : The Evolution of a Lost Book ALEXANDER HAMMOND	13
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NOTICE

In volume 40, number 2, of *The Library Chronicle*, some copies were improperly assembled so that the gathering comprising pages 165-180 is misplaced. To the degree that our remaining copies of the issue will serve the purpose, we will replace any such defective copies. —Editor.

Published semiannually by the Friends of the University of Pennsylvania Library. Subscription rate, \$6.00 for non-members. § Articles and notes of bibliographic and bibliophile interest are invited. Contributions should be submitted to William E. Miller, Editor, *The Library Chronicle*, University of Pennsylvania Library, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 19174.

ABBREVIATIONS IN THE ESSAYS AND NOTES

To prevent considerable repetitions of titles, as well as to reduce printing costs, the following items are cited thus:

BJ *Broadway Journal.*

D Edward H. Davidson, *Poe: A Critical Study* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957).

F Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV, ed., reprint of the *Godey's* version of "The Visionary" ("The Assignation"), *LC*, 39 (1973), 90–100.

H *The Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. J. A. Harrison (New York, 1902).

L *The Letters of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. John Ward Ostrom (New York, 1969).

M *The Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, ed. Thomas Ollive Mabbott (Cambridge, Mass., 1969) [still in progress; only the *Poems* are currently published].

PN *Poe Newsletter*, later *Poe Studies*.

Q Arthur Hobson Quinn, *Edgar Allan Poe: A Critical Biography* (New York, 1941).

R *Poe: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Robert Regan (Englewood Cliffs, 1967).

SLM *The Southern Literary Messenger*

Tales *The Tales of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York, 1845).

TGA *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (Philadelphia, 1840 [1839]).

V John Grier Varner, *Poe and the 'Philadelphia Saturday Courier'* (Charlottesville, 1933).

Other journal titles are abbreviated according to the MLA form, unless none exists. Thus, *MLQ*, but *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine*.

Poe and the Art of the Well Wrought Tale

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN FISHER IV

I

OUR essays intend to serve Poe studies by treating textual history and evolving versions of the tales. Our author was, doubtless, a matchless and never satisfied craftsman, although that very trait has worked against him as much as it has highlighted his excellencies. His revisions have been noticed in far fewer critiques than they warrant since the collations and essay generally assessing them were appended by R. A. Stewart to the long-standard Harrison edition of Poe's works (1902). Barren spots in these areas have been discerned by such subsequent scholars as Thomas Ollive Mabbott (late editor for *The Collected Works of Edgar Allan Poe*), Killis Campbell, and Floyd Stovall.

Textual analyses of Poe's tales have come slowly, although several do exist, while other matters took precedence. Thus, Campbell's edition of the poems (1917) includes a keen analysis of the writer's thoughtful changes in his verse. Supplementing Campbell, Dudley R. Hutcherson explores what might be a selective edition of the poems printed in the *Philadelphia Saturday Museum* (March 4, 1843), where variants appear in a biographical sketch of Poe; and John C. Broderick evaluates the alternate texts of "Lenore." The Harrison oversights receive partial correction in Woodbury's revised biography (1909), and Mabbott records additional appearances of tales, furthering the work of John Cook Wyllie. The forthcoming volumes of fiction in the Harvard edition will surely reveal more relevant material. Recently, a valuable examination of Poe's theory of fiction appeared in an article on the different versions of the Hawthorne reviews.¹

Long ago, in a lamentably unpublished dissertation, Ruth L. Hudson selected stories for a study of evolving texts. Her only publication from these pursuits, an essay on "Ligeia," opens new paths for study, even though it contains definitive work. A. H. Quinn called atten-

tion to a manuscript of "Morella," with an ending different from printed versions, and a recent commentator cites a misprint in the same tale that has persisted in various publications. Similar inaccuracies occur in "Ligeia" and "The Assignation."² Some writers cause confusion or debate because of imperfect textual approaches to Poe. The former use the apparent original of a given tale, but actually cite a later, variant appearance.³ The latter produce interesting critiques employing the same materials to reach widely divergent conclusions.

Revisions in "The Oval Portrait," "Metzengerstein," "The Assignation," and "Berenice" have received greatest notice prior to our collection, although Professor Hammond has considered changes in other works, and Boll and Pollin—though the latter not so centrally—have examined alterations in "Murders," "Mystification," and "How to Write a Blackwood Article."⁴ Analyses of the first three tales listed above indicate various attitudes toward Poe now current. "The Oval Portrait"—originally "Life in Death"—draws greatest comment. Typical of some peculiarities in Poe scholarship today is the latest study, which neglects to cite its predecessors!⁵ "Metzengerstein," too, calls forth polar opinions about its humor and sobriety. Probably intended to elicit sneers for its cliché Germanism or Gothicism in the context of the Folio Club, it also attracts seekers for a comic underside, which humor the revisions do not bear out. We must not forget Poe's letter to Harrison Hall, a Philadelphia publisher who he hoped would get out a collection of fiction, in which the comic substance of the critical portions, rather than the tales themselves, in the Folio Club collection would be emphasized. The loss of these critical inter-chapters has caused speculation concerning the early fiction. Thus, these tales generally have no clear-cut serious or humorous implications, although Hammond's study below gallantly addresses this much vexed matter.⁶ "The Assignation," especially, invites divided views, as Professors Benton, Thompson, and I indicate. Happily, until a challenge is hurled its way, a recent survey of revisions in "Berenice" entails no disputatious bifurcation.⁷

Careful examination of Poe's methods in polishing his fiction offers new perspectives on that work, despite the quarryings already mentioned. More may come clear about his literary imagination when his conscious artistry and his practical editorial bent, in combination, are more thoroughly analyzed. The latter tendency un-

doubtedly results in the compressions so frequent in his revisions, in the practice of excising whatever tends away from his prized unity of effect. For example, the openings of "The Assignation" and "Murders" are condensed in order to move readers more swiftly toward the central concerns. The provinces of poetry merge with those of prose under Poe's management, in matters of sound, symbolism, and syntax. The language in "Metzengerstein" and "The Assignation" is recast so that alliteration reinforces intense situations or emotions. The care in so slight a piece as "A Tale of Jerusalem" also reveals attentiveness to auditory pleasure, when "a half hour" becomes "half an hour." No less care appears in the verbal variants between the first and final appearances of "The Masque of the Red Death," a magnificent prose poem in which sentence structures change to create more rhythmic cadences. In "Usher" and "Eleonora" thoughtful refashioning toward less tangibility heightens the undercurrents of meaning and suggestion, i.e., symbolism, as the characters lose concrete physicality and thereby move into the regions of shadow so dear to Poe. The motto added to "Usher" also contributes to making Roderick (and the narrator?) a more ethereal being, but one, nevertheless, of greater literary substance than those of countless other purveyors of fiction in magazines of the day. More vagueness is also introduced into "MS. Found in a Bottle," through mere turns of phrase. A "windy," if temporarily topical phrase like "strikes upon my soul with the shock of a Galvanic battery" becomes "excites within my spirit a sense—a sentiment ineffable." By such means are we persuaded away from sensationalism and into more subtle emotional regions. The punctuating of his works also occupied Poe, not nearly so unwontedly as we might superficially surmise. To note but one example of the slovenly punctuation or proofreading against which he inveighed, we need only turn the pages of *Godey's* during the early 1830's, when Poe began to write fiction, to see an outrageous sprinkling of periods into places where they surely do not belong! The inconsistent spelling of "surprise" (interchanging "z" with the final "s") in "The Visionary," Poe's first publication in that same periodical, further attests its by-no-means faultless editorial labors. Thus these chippings from the workbench and other textual subjects analyzed below shed light on Poe's relationship to his writings.

Materials for our studies are several. Manuscripts for some tales exist, although they are primarily fair—very fair—copies intended for printers, an exception being that for “Murders.” Because of scant quantity of foul papers, we must turn instead to printed sources, which are numerous, although if a printed text does not have Poe’s authority we do not use it. To cite an example, the texts of “Bon-Bon” from the *Courier*, *SLM*, *TGA*, and *BJ* carry Poe’s own approval, although that in the Philadelphia *Spirit of the Times*, April 19, 1845, probably is pirated. With Poe’s attentiveness to matters editorial, we can be sure that he had some hand in the printing particulars of many of his own works, although he could not overlook the ease with which punctuation was frequently botched in the print-shops. His position in relation to his publication history differs markedly from many other American writers in that he often enjoyed some editorial capacity for the very journals circulating his writings. Like one of his own narrators, he actively entered the scene, and, consequently, he went beyond many other writers of his day and ours, who do not take lively concern for the practicalities of literary life.

The work in attending to the textual side of Poe often grows as involved as one of his own detective tales. The chronicle of the journeys of the MS. for “Murders” includes hair-breadth ’scapes from destruction and mutilation, although it now reposes peacefully in the Free Library of Philadelphia. The separation of the fragment of “Silence” from the Introduction to the Folio Club collection involves the Griswolds’ generosity to repositories in Virginia and Massachusetts. Perusal of the MS. for “The System of Dr. Tarr and Professor Fether,” “Hans Pfaall,” and “A Tale of the Ragged Mountains” transports the reader to the excellent collections in the Morgan Library. Only the first one, handsomely bound, is easily accessible, the frail condition of the others necessitating microfilm study. The MS. of “The Spectacles,” now in the Humanities Research Center Library of the University of Texas, will afford material for a forthcoming study by Joseph J. Moldenhauer, Jr. “‘Thou Art the Man!’,” in the New York Public Library, has been scrutinized by the late Thomas O. Mabbott, whose results are on record.⁸

The first printings of some tales were long thought lost, and we can see now in perspective that Harrison was not so thorough as he

might have been in pursuing such items, despite his Herculean labors for his time. The precarious survival of certain tales in the original is only too emphatic when we realize that the sole known copy of the *Baltimore Saturday Visiter* for October 19, 1833—wherein “MS. Found” first appeared—survives in the Maryland Historical Society Library in Baltimore. Keeping it company is the *Dollar Newspaper*—a Philadelphia periodical that ultimately found its way to Baltimore—where “The Gold-Bug” was initially published (June 28, 1843). The casual pursuer of Poeiana is not likely to stumble upon the *United States Saturday Post* for August 19, 1843, either, although if he does a treasure will be evident on the opening page—the first version of “The Black Cat.” Some recondite texts are available because of twentieth-century scholars’ excavations. The first tales by Poe to see print, in the Philadelphia *Saturday Courier* during 1832, are conveniently reprinted in John Grier Varner’s handsome edition, the *SLM* version of “Lionizing” appears entire in Harrison’s notes, and “The Visionary,” from the 1834 *Godey’s*, is now easily accessible in *LC* for 1973.

II

An Emersonian attitude toward foolish consistency is clear in our essays.⁹ Each author presents material according to individual preference, being restricted only by the requirement of textual history or Poe’s compositional habits. Divergent attitudes or approaches are evident in matters of our author’s themes and theories, his comic and serious potential, and his craftsmanship. Not all of us see every bit of the canon as a gem of purest ray, and when we perceive something less than gemlike we say so. Poe’s own unflinching spirit lies behind our practices.

Our essays come together appropriately here, for over them hovers the spirit of Arthur Hobson Quinn, who first instituted courses devoted solely to Poe. Quinn’s monumental and still authoritative chronicle of our author’s life and career first stimulated my own interest in the changing tales—the products of such interest evident in the following pages. Now, years later, facilities at the University of Pennsylvania Library, particularly its rare books and periodicals collections, fostered under Quinn’s aegis, have sped along the work of many contributors. An inescapable influence, too, is that

of the late Thomas Ollive Mabbott, authority on Poe's texts, demon proofreader, and contributor to innumerable projects besides Quinn's biography, to which he afforded substantial aid.

Acknowledgements to those whose number is legion appear in individual essays. Meriting particular thanks for their direct or indirect betterment of this work are Miss Susie O'Neill, Bryn Mawr College; Kenneth W. Cameron, Emeritus Professor of English, Trinity College; Eric W. Carlson, University of Connecticut; and Mr. and Mrs. William Burns, Yonkers, New York, who, with their family, tolerated and assisted a peripatetic Poe scholar. Although they knew not the specific nature of our collection, Professor Benton and Mrs. Mabbott offered sound and generous advice. To their names we add that of yet another Renaissance scholar (not American Renaissance) to whom we owe gratitude: Doctor William E. Miller, Editor of *The Library Chronicle*, who offered pages, hospitality, and assistance to the textual study of Edgar Allan Poe.

NOTES

1. Hutcherson's and Broderick's essays appear respectively in *AL*, 5 (1933), 36-48, and 35 (1964), 504-510. The first, alas, is riddled with inaccuracies. Woodberry's work is in vol. 2 of his 1909 biography, pp. 399, 415; Mabbott's in *N&Q*, 183 (1942), 163-164; Wyllie's in *University of Virginia Humanistic Studies*, 1 (1941), 322-338; Walter Evans on the Hawthorne texts, *PBSA*, 66 (1972), 407-419.
2. Hudson, "Poe Recognizes 'Ligeia' as His Masterpiece," *English Essays in Honor of James Southall Wilson*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Charlottesville, 1951), pp. 35-44. Q:214. The manuscript is held by the Henry E. Huntington Library, and it is to appear entire in *HLQ*. Kevin McCarthy calls attention to "'Sameness' versus 'Saneness' in Poe's 'Morella,'" *AN&Q*, 11 (1973), 149-150. He does not consider some of the more available texts, however, such as those edited by Harrison, Davidson, Auden, Carlson, Allen, and Thompson—surely more likely for use by Poe scholars and students than some he cites. "Ligeia" is emended by June and Jack Davis in "An Error in Some Recent Printings of 'Ligeia,'" *PoeS*, 3 (1970), 21. In unintended irony in the text of "The Assignation," *Great Short Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, G. R. Thompson (New York, 1970) prints "a forehead of unusual breath," rather than breadth, for the Byronic stranger (p. 143). A manuscript text of "Epimanes," included by Poe in a letter (1833) to the editors of the *New-England Magazine*, now owned by H. Bradley Martin, is partially reproduced in Q:200.
3. For example, Richard P. Benton, "Is Poe's 'The Assignation' a Hoax?" *NCF*,

18 (1963), 193–197, seems to use the 1834 version of the tale, but cites a later text. The original is used by Roy P. Basler, “Byronism in Poe’s ‘To One in Paradise’,” *AL*, 9 (1937), 232–236, which study, interestingly, Benton documents. An elusiveness characterizes the *Godey*’s text (entitled “The Visionary”) in studies past and present, although the original is now conveniently reprinted in *LC*, 39 (1973), 85–109. See also *LC*, 40 (1976), 221–251.

4. “A Reconstruction of Poe’s 1833 *Tales of the Folio Club: Preliminary Notes*,” *PoeS*, 5 (1972), 25–32, condenses and revises Hammond’s theories in his unpublished dissertation. See also Ernest Boll, “The Manuscript of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, and Poe’s Revisions,” *MP*, 40 (1943), 302–315. Descriptive bibliography is primary here, and so Asarch’s study in our collection supplements Boll’s work and employs later critical studies. Pollin’s essays appear respectively in *MissQ*, 25 (1972), 111–130, and *Papers on Poe: Essays in Honor of John Ward Ostrom*, ed. Richard P. Veler (Springfield, Ohio, 1972), pp. 92–103. Some attention goes to the changes in “Eleonora” in Floyd Stovall’s *Edgar Poe the Poet: Essays Old and New* (Charlottesville, 1968), pp. 251–254; and in Stuart Levine’s *Edgar Poe: Seer and Craftsman* (De Land, Fla., 1972), p. 120, other revisions are noticed. See also my “Poe in the Seventies: The Poet among the Critics,” *MDAC*, 2 (1973), 354–364.

5. Richard W. Dowell, “The Ironic History of Poe’s ‘Life in Death’: A Literary Skeleton in the Closet,” *AL*, 42 (1971), 478–486. The previous critiques are by Seymour L. Gross, *MLN*, 74 (1959), 16–20; G. R. Thompson, *ELN*, 6 (1969), 107–114. Thompson argues that the revisions intensify Poe’s mode of romantic irony, a subject of much debate just now. He provides similar *aperçus* in *Poe’s Fiction: Romantic Irony in the Gothic Tales* (Madison, Wis., 1973), pp. 133–136, 229.

6. G. R. Thompson, “Poe’s ‘Flawed’ Gothic: Absurdist Techniques in ‘Metzengerstein’ and the *Courier Satires*,” *ESQ*, 60 (1970), 38–58; repr. as *New Approaches to Poe*, ed. Richard P. Benton (Hartford, 1970). The irregular appearance of the old *ESQ* prevented my knowing about Thompson’s work before I published “Poe’s ‘Metzengerstein’: Not a Hoax,” *AL*, 42 (1971), 487–494, in which I demonstrate how the tale is sober, apprentice Gothicism: *chacun à son goût*.

7. The varied opinions are summarized in my *LC* essays, mentioned above. Thompson’s introduction to *Great Short Works* is worth quoting here: “The tale is both a Romantic tale of dark passion and a burlesque (p. 33).” This statement, combined with Eric W. Carlson’s fine studies in Veler’s *Papers on Poe* (pp. i ff.) and *Poe on the Soul of Man* (Baltimore, 1973), influenced my ideas about “The Assignation.” In “Poe’s Revisions in ‘Berenice’: Beyond the Gothic,” *ATQ*, 24 (1974), 19–23, David E. E. Sloane and I indicate Poe’s muting the early sensational features in that tale, making situation and character more credible.

8. “A Poe Manuscript,” *BNYPL*, 28 (1924), 103–105.

9. The diversity encountered in these pages maintains the spirit of recent Poe criticism, although a preponderance of glances toward the more serious Poe is

apparent. Two excellent studies that illuminate Poe's practices, and that give evidence of the continuing variations in critical approaches, are Bruce I. Weiner, "Poe's Subversion of Verisimilitude" and J. Gerald Kennedy's "The Magazine Tales of the 1830's," both in the *ATQ* collection mentioned in n. 7. I have tried to synthesize some current divergences, using Poe's revisions as my bases, in "How to Write a Blackwood Article: Revise, Revise, Revise," an address to the Poe Studies Association on December 28, 1973.

Edgar Allan Poe's *Tales of the Folio Club*: The Evolution of a Lost Book

ALEXANDER HAMMOND

WHEN Hawthorne and Poe began writing short fiction, both composed tales as parts of larger collections and experimented with frames designed to lend these composite works some form of book unity. The publication of their experiments as wholes, whether serially or in book form, eluded the two authors, however, forcing them to break up their stillborn projects and place items from them piecemeal in the Christmas annuals and magazines.¹ Because the manuscripts for these early projects have not survived intact, the canons of both writers feature what are in effect lost books, the original contents and designs of which scholars have had to infer from incomplete evidence.² But while the textual history of Hawthorne's early collections has been thoroughly studied in this process, that for Poe's *Tales of the Folio Club* in its several versions has not. To fill this need, I present here a history of the Folio Club collection between 1831 and 1836, examining its evolution and its fortunes in the marketplace in the following order: (i) the genesis and makeup of the first known state of the collection that Poe offered to the *New-England Magazine* in May 1833 as *Eleven Tales of the Arabesque*; (ii) the marketing of this version under the title *Tales of the Folio Club* from the fall of 1833 through the summer of 1835, with particular attention to its treatment by the Philadelphia publishing house of Carey, Lea, & Blanchard; and (iii) the probable makeup of the sixteen- and seventeen-tale Folio Club collections and Poe's efforts to publish them during 1836.

I

Poe's first Folio Club collection is the work of the years between 1831, when he moved to Baltimore after the publication of his third volume of poetry in New York, and 1833, when he initially attempted to publish the work as a whole. His reasons for turning to a new genre at this time must remain obscure, although the image of a

desperately poor young writer trying his hand successively at poetry, prose fiction, and then verse drama (*Politian*, the next major project he undertook after the eleven-story Folio Club collection had been tentatively accepted by a publisher) strongly suggests an author both exploring the limits of his talent as well as seeking to create a sustained work that might in one stroke establish his name in the literary marketplace.

His poverty notwithstanding, Poe hungered for recognition as an author. When just twenty, he wrote his foster father in reference to his plans for a second volume of poems, “At my time of life there is much in being *before the eye of the world*—if once noticed I can easily cut out a path to reputation” (Poe’s italics).³ Two years later, a much less sanguine Poe, undoubtedly disappointed by the meager response to *Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Other Poems*, complained in his Preface to *Poems* of 1831 of the “great barrier” faced by the American writer: “He is read, if at all, in preference to the combined and established wit of the world. I say established; for it is with literature as with law or empire—an established name is an estate in tenure, or a throne in possession.”⁴ While Poe expands this comment into the familiar lament that native authors suffer the disadvantage of an audience that pays homage to foreign literature, underlying it is his earlier perception of the value of being “*before the eye of the world*,” now coupled with the suspicion that writers who enjoy “established” names effectively monopolize public attention and thus prevent notice of such unheralded but obviously deserving talents as his own. And the two additional years of literary obscurity that he spent in labor on his first collection of tales evidently only whetted his sense of the importance of catching the world’s eye: after winning the fiction prize in a local literary contest in 1833, Poe started a fist fight by insisting that the winner in the poetry division publicly concede that honor to him as well.⁵

The sources behind the 1833 Folio Club collection reveal Poe to have been an avid student of the literary scene he aspired to enter, one who pored over American and British magazines, closely followed the careers of rising young authors like N. P. Willis and Benjamin Disraeli, and kept abreast of the current best sellers.⁶ The tales in the volume, “literary exercises in the style of popular authors of the day” as T. O. Mabbott describes them,⁷ represent a panorama of

the most important modes in contemporary fiction. Poe may well have hoped that their variety would be received as a virtuoso performance in the art of fiction comparable to that of Horace and James Smith in poetry with *Rejected Addresses* (London, 1812), a famous collection of verse parodies which, like *Tales of the Folio Club*, features a cast of contemporary authors and employs a literary competition as a framing device.⁸ Although the function of the stories in Poe's 1833 collection is too complex to allow them to be described as parodies, both this work and *Rejected Addresses* are satires that demand readers well versed in things literary, and Poe may possibly have seen in the popularity of the Smiths' book a reliable indication that an American audience existed for his own, more ambitious experiment. He was to learn otherwise.

To frame the 1833 collection, Poe evolved a comic microcosm of his literary world in the form of a bizarre Spectator Club whose members are disguised caricatures of well-known British and American authors (there are two notable exceptions: Satan, incognito behind green spectacles; and a mysterious little man in a black coat who is probably Poe himself). At monthly intervals—perhaps recalling the publishing cycle of most literary magazines in this era—the club holds a contest at which the members read original tales, comment on one another's compositions in turn, and then vote to determine the best and worst among their efforts. The remarks following each tale were intended as a "burlesque upon criticism."⁹ Although these sections of the frame are lost, presumably they involved misinterpretations of the stories¹⁰ and exaggerated the savage attacks, literary feuds, indulgence in personalities, and affectation of elitist authority that characterized the magazine criticism Poe followed most closely in this period.¹¹ The club's organization, I believe, satirically institutionalizes the practice of destructive criticism: an elite circle of authors who act as critics of works by other members of the same in-group, the club keeps itself supplied with food, drink, and a meeting place by regularly "using up" one of its number, since the loser of one month's competition must host the banquet for the next, over which the winner, to compound the injury with insult, rules as president.

The club limits its membership to eleven (in later projections of the work, this number increases as more tales are added)—a restric-

tion apparently satirizing the barriers new authors face from “established names” holding “thrones in possession” that Poe complained of in 1831. The frame as a whole is organized as the story of the club’s response to the narrator, an initiate who joins after too many losses force out “the Honourable Augustus Scratchaway” (presumably the membership finds a Neo-Classical style passé); he rebels when his maiden effort is voted worst, and publishes a record of his first and only meeting with the group to expose it as a “diabolical association” plotting to “abolish Literature, Subvert the Press, and overturn the Government of Nouns and Pronouns.”¹²

Prototypes for the various elements of this frame are numerous. The tradition of the literary club, both actual and fictive, is a familiar one in Anglo-American literature, and a local Baltimore group, the Delphian Club, apparently served as Poe’s immediate model for the Folio Club’s organization.¹³ De Quincey’s “On Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts,” in which a narrator unmasks the “Society of Connoisseurs in Murder,” may be the source of the exposé motif in Poe’s frame, although the pattern of the *eiron* who unmasks *alazon* figures is a common one in satire.¹⁴ And the chaotic disruption of a grotesque drinking society in the Palace of Wines episode in Disraeli’s *Vivian Grey* seems a likely model for the climax of Poe’s frame story, particularly because this comic scene is a major source for one of the tales in the 1833 volume.

On a more general level, Plato’s *Symposium* at least indirectly supplies Poe with his basic format: a banquet setting, a contest among participants representing different intellectual viewpoints, and a provision for debate on individual contributions followed by a vote on their merits. Since the symposium is a common vehicle for literary criticism, the pattern is appropriate for a burlesque of the contemporary state of that art. Indeed, Poe probably expected his readers to recognize a congruency between his frame and the dinner-meeting symposia in “Noctes Ambrosianæ,” the regular critical discussions among the editorial personae of *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine* that were perhaps the periodical’s best-known feature. The banquet settings in this series and in Poe’s frame are, of course, traditional in Menippean satire, archetypally exemplified by Trimalchio’s feast in the *Satyricon*.¹⁵ I noted earlier that the literary contest in the Folio Club design has an antecedent in the frame of *Rejected Addresses*,

another example of this genre. At about the time Poe began work on his collection, he could have found an analogous framing device in a Menippean satire entitled “The Election of Editor”; published in irregular installments in the early numbers of *Fraser’s Magazine* (May–September 1830), it consisted of parodic campaign speeches supposedly delivered to a raucous audience by various British authors competing for the magazine’s unfilled editorial post. As in Poe’s work, the devil also puts in an appearance in this satire.¹⁶

Although general antecedents for the Folio Club project can be found in collections of linked stories like the *Decameron* and Irving’s *Tales of a Traveller*, the above analogues more accurately identify the tradition in which Poe composed the 1833 state of *Tales of the Folio Club*, at least insofar as we can determine its character from available evidence. Typically for a Menippean satire, the eleven-story collection would have served its reader a mixed feast: caricatures of contemporary authors and quizzes for identifying them; ironic imitations of a medley of different kinds of fiction; a burlesque of criticism probably displaying the excessive erudition characteristic of many of the tales in the work; and a comic frame story featuring a banquet that would move progressively, one suspects, toward drunken chaos.

Precisely when the design of this version matured is difficult to specify. The first evidence we have for dating its evolution is the publication, at intervals during 1832, of five tales in the Philadelphia *Saturday Courier*: “Metzengerstein” (January 14); “The Duke de L’Omelette” (March 3); “A Tale of Jerusalem” (June 9); “A Decided Loss” (November 10); and “The Bargain Lost” (December 1). Scholars reasonably assume that all five stories were among the eighty or so losing entries in the *Courier’s* prize tale contest, first announced on July 16, 1831, with a deadline of December 1 in the same year.¹⁷ Poe was sufficiently desperate for money during the fall of 1831 to risk these tales on an all-or-nothing gamble for the \$100 premium (the *Courier* claimed publication rights on all entries). Two years later he would make just such a multiple entry to a similar contest in Baltimore. One also doubts that he could have sold the *Courier* any of these pieces in 1832, so soon after it had reaped such a cheap harvest of new fiction by sponsoring this contest. If Poe was aware of the publication of these five tales, he considered it a fact best ignored: signed, revised forms of each of them appear in the

Southern Literary Messenger during 1835 and 1836 with no indication of their prior printings.

The generally accepted inference that Poe wrote these five tales specifically for the *Courier's* premium should be treated with some caution. Versions of four of these stories (all but "A Tale of Jerusalem") can be identified as parts of Poe's 1833 collection. One of them, "The Duke de L'Omelette," fits its framework in such a way as to make improbable its composition in isolation from some version of that context. And all five are mannered imitations of different kinds of contemporary fiction, clearly distinguishable from one another in subject and style, suggesting that they were indeed designed to serve as contributions from individual members of some ur-form of the Folio Club symposium. Such a hypothesis certainly explains the variety among Poe's first published tales without, of course, ruling out the possibility that the author conceived his framework in the midst of writing one or more of them for the *Courier's* premium.

We have only meager evidence of Poe's activities in 1832 relevant to his eleven-story collection. Lambert A. Wilmer, who worked in Baltimore as editor of the *Saturday Visiter* between January and October of 1832,¹⁸ recalled late in life that Poe's time in this period "appeared to be constantly occupied by his literary labors; he had already published a volume of poems, and written several of those minor romances which afterwards appeared in the collection 'Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque'" (published in 1839).¹⁹ While in Baltimore, Wilmer almost certainly wrote the following notice in the "To Correspondents" column of the *Visiter* for August 4, 1832:

Mr. Edgar A. Poe, has favoured us with the perusal of some manuscript tales written by him. If we were merely to say that we had *read* them, it would be a compliment, for manuscripts of this kind are very seldom read by any one but the author. But we may further say that we have read these tales, every syllable, with the greatest pleasure, and for originality, richness of imagery, and purity of the style, few American authors in our opinion have produced any thing superior. With Mr. Poe's permission we may hereafter lay one or two of the tales before our readers.²⁰

Because Poe and Wilmer were close friends, the pretense of requesting the author's permission to publish may safely be considered a

rhetorical device for justifying a puff of stories already scheduled for later issues. No tales appeared, however, probably because at about this time Wilmer became involved in a quarrel with the *Visiter's* owners that led to his departure from its editorship in the fall of 1832.²¹

By the following spring Poe had completed what is to our knowledge the first full text of his eleven-story Folio Club collection; on May 4, 1833, he offered the work to the *New-England Magazine*, sending "Epimanes" (later entitled "Four Beasts in One: The Homocamelopard") as a sample tale. He may have selected it for strategic reasons, assuming that a tale satirizing Jackson would be welcomed by a Whiggish Boston journal.²² The story was, he explained,

one of a number of similar pieces which I have contemplated publishing under the title 'Eleven Tales of the Arabesque'. They are supposed to be read at table by the eleven members of a literary club, and are followed by the remarks of the company on each. These remarks are intended as a burlesque upon criticism. In the whole, originality more than any thing else has been attempted. I have said this much with the view of offering you the entire M.S. If you like the specimen which I have sent I will forward the rest at your suggestion—but if you decide upon publishing all the tales, it would not be proper to print the one I now send until it can be printed in its place with the others.²³

Poe also gave the magazine the alternatives of publishing "Epimanes" alone or of rejecting the entire proposition; the editors elected the latter option—whether they first read the collection as a whole is not known—for none of Poe's work appears in this journal. The title *Eleven Tales of the Arabesque* was tentative; later this same year Poe was calling the volume *Tales of the Folio Club*.

Two manuscript leaves from this version of the collection survive, presumably parts of the "entire M.S." that Poe wanted to show to the *New-England Magazine*, although they could conceivably represent a fair copy made at some later date. The text covers both sides of these leaves and is hand-printed in the same tiny Roman script as the copy of "Epimanes" accompanying the above letter;²⁴ the first leaf, bearing the page numbers 9 and 10 at its top, fore-edge corners, begins with what was evidently a section title, "THE FOLIO CLUB," and features a complete prologue for the eleven-

story symposium framework (this includes a list naming and describing the club members individually); the second leaf, paginated 61 and 62 with the numbers similarly positioned, contains approximately the last half of "Siope" (later, "Silence—A Fable"), a tale first published in a Baltimore Christmas annual in the fall of 1837. These leaves were preserved in the papers of Rufus W. Griswold, who presumably acquired them when he became Poe's literary executor. When James A. Harrison first examined them to prepare his text of the Prologue for the *Complete Works of Edgar Allan Poe*, they were still in the possession of the Griswold family (the first leaf has since been donated to the Houghton Library at Harvard, the second to the Virginia State Library in Richmond); at that time, they may have been joined together, although Harrison's description is ambiguous enough to be treated cautiously: "The MS. . . . is a small quarto of four pages. . . . The paging is unfortunately not consecutive, nor is the matter."²⁵

T. O. Mabbott correctly assumes, I believe, that these leaves were originally conjugate halves of a single folded sheet in a quired manuscript,²⁶ a hypothesis that explains why they survived together, for the most likely individual leaf to be saved with the Prologue from such a manuscript would be a conjugate one in the gathering. The physical evidence strongly supports this assumption. The weight and texture of the paper in these leaves appear to be virtually identical, as do their dimensions. Although unevenly trimmed, both measure approximately 6 by $7\frac{5}{8}$ inches. The inner edge of the first appears to have been torn at the fold, that of the second unevenly cut, suggesting its smaller width of roughly $5\frac{3}{4}$ inches results from the application of scissors and not from Poe's folding; their heights at this same edge (where, if conjugate, they would have been joined) differ by only $\frac{1}{32}$ of an inch, an insignificant gap considering the imprecision of folding and trimming by hand. However, experimentation with quired manuscripts shows that pages 9 and 10 cannot be conjugate with 61 and 62 in a gathering composed solely of evenly paired leaves. But since the inner edge of the Prologue has two symmetrically located indentations that clearly result from sewing, presumably it and the "Siope" leaf were originally conjugate partners in a gathering containing an odd number of inner leaves attached by stubs alone.

Although the Prologue has a few neat cancellations, both it and the "Siope" leaf appear to be fair copies that reveal a concern for layout unusual in a manuscript. The text of the Prologue is crowded to the tail edge of page 10 and ends: "Here Mr. Snap . . . produced a M.S. and read as follows." Obviously Poe wanted the next page to be wholly occupied by the title and opening paragraphs of Mr. Snap's tale. The verso of the "Siope" leaf is analogous in that Poe fills space remaining after the end of the tale with a long, wavy dash instead of immediately beginning the next section of the work. Clearly these leaves are fragments from a manuscript designed as a facsimile of a printed book. To prepare this facsimile, Poe probably began by quarto-folding a number of whole sheets of approximately pott size,²⁷ quiring them, trimming off the folds along the short dimension, and spiking and hand-sewing the spine. Nine such sheets yield a gathering in which the surviving leaves would be most nearly conjugate; and if for any reason Poe cut off a single leaf between the two remaining fragments in such a gathering, they would be exactly conjugate. Judging from the length of the tales that can be assigned to this collection, the entire manuscript would have to include more than one gathering of this size, probably tied into covers of some sort.

As various scholars have argued, the membership list in the Prologue provides a means for establishing the order in which the eleven Folio Club characters were to read their tales in this manuscript as well as for identifying which of Poe's early stories were contributed by each figure. On the basis of those arguments (see fn. 2), the chart below outlines the probable physical layout of this little hand-made book. The number of pages assigned each tale is an approximation that assumes Poe wrote 400 words on each side of a leaf, an average figure drawn from the 390 words of text filling the recto of the "Siope" fragment. An asterisk precedes sections of the framework now lost.

Eleven Tales of the Arabesque (Tales of the Folio Club)

pp. 1-8 *Title page? Additional editorial machinery? Authorial preface?

pp. 9-10 "THE FOLIO CLUB": Prologue from MS. leaf narrated by the newest club member who "edits" the remainder of the work as an exposé.

I pp. 11ff. "Raising the Wind; or, Diddling Considered as One of the Exact Sciences"; text from the Philadelphia *Saturday Courier*, 13 (October 14, 1843), 1; contributed by Mr. Snap, the club president. (While the late publication date of this story makes its original length problematical and its inclusion in the collection a hypothesis open to debate, internal evidence for assigning it to Mr. Snap is, in my opinion, convincing.)

*The "remarks of the company" on Mr. Snap's tale "intended as a burlesque upon criticism."

II (12 pages) "The Visionary" (later "The Assignation"); text from *Godey's*, 8 (January 1834), 40-43; contributed by Mr. Convolvulus Gondola.

*Burlesque criticism.

III (15 pages) "Bon-Bon"; text from *SLM*, 1 (August 1835), 693-698; contributed by De Rerum Naturâ, Esqr.

*Burlesque criticism.

IV pp. 59-62 (4 pages) "Siope"; MS. leaf (pp. 61-62) with first two pages restored from "Siope—A Fable," *The Baltimore Book* (Baltimore, 1837), pp. 79-82; contributed by the very little man in a black coat.

pp. 63 ff. *Burlesque criticism.

V (10 pages) "MS. Found in a Bottle"; text from the Baltimore *Saturday Visiter*, 3 (October 19, 1833), 1, or from *The Gift* (Philadelphia, 1835), pp. 67-87; contributed by Mr. Solomon Seadrift.

*Burlesque criticism.

VI (10 pages) "Metzengerstein"; text from *Saturday Courier*, 2 (January 14, 1832), 1, or more probably from its revised state in *SLM*, 2 (January 1836), 97-100; contributed by Mr. Horribile Dictû.

*Burlesque criticism.

VII (16 pages) "Loss of Breath"; text from *SLM*, 1 (September 1835), 735-740; contributed by Mr. Blackwood Blackwood.²⁸

*Burlesque criticism.

viii (3 pages) “The Duke [Duc] de L’Omelette”; text from the *Saturday Courier*, 2 (March 3, 1832), 1, or more probably from its revised state in *SLM*, 2 (February 1836), 150–151; contributed by the host, Mr. Rouge-et-Noir.

*Burlesque criticism.

ix (12 pages) “King Pest the First”; text from *SLM*, 1 (September 1835), 757–761; contributed by the stout gentleman.

*Burlesque criticism.

x (7 pages) “Epimanes”; MS. from Poe’s letter of May 4, 1833, to the *New-England Magazine*, now in the H. Bradley Martin collection; contributed by Chronologos Chronology.

*Burlesque criticism.

xi (3 pages) “Lionizing”; text from *SLM*, 1 (May 1835), 515–516; contributed by the narrator of the Prologue.

*Burlesque criticism, followed by the vote to select the best and worst tale among the above. According to Poe’s description of an enlarged version of this collection, the narrator’s story is voted worst (one obvious motive for his exposé), after which he seizes all the manuscripts and flees from the host’s house.

This arrangement is consistent with the pagination of the two manuscript leaves as they would be positioned in a finished text with the burlesque commentary intact. The original manuscript obviously had fifty pages of text between the end of its Prologue on page 10 and the beginning of the “Siope” leaf on page 61. The first half of “Siope” would fill two of these pages; “Raising the Wind,” “The Visionary,” and “Bon-Bon” would occupy approximately thirty-seven additional pages, thus leaving about eleven total pages to be divided among the three blocks of burlesque criticism that would follow these tales (a not unreasonable proportion of commentary to story matter considering the uncertainties presented by the text of “Raising the Wind”).

Before tracing the later fortunes of this collection in the marketplace, I should emphasize that the above reconstruction yields a context for interpreting the revisions the *Courier* tales underwent before

their second printings in *SLM*. (If these stories were from an ur-form of the Folio Club collection, then the volume passed through an intermediate stage of evolution before reaching the state represented by the Prologue leaf.) The changes in “The Bargain Lost,” heavily revised before its 1835 publication as “Bon-Bon,” obviously result from efforts to make the story appropriate for a disguised Satan to contribute to the 1833 collection (in this revision, the philosopher’s room in “The Bargain Lost” is left in Venice, as it were, to be occupied by the Byronic hero of “The Visionary,” the second tale in the volume).²⁹ The extensive revision of “A Decided Loss” before its 1835 appearance as “Loss of Breath. A Tale à la Blackwood” can be similarly attributed to the demands of Mr. Blackwood Blackwood’s role in the eleven-story framework (see fn. 28). “Metzengerstein” and “The Duke de L’Omelette” underwent numerous minor revisions but few major changes in their *SLM* printings. Evidently these stories preserved their original character in the Folio Club framework, although the example of “Bon-Bon” and “Loss of Breath” suggests that their *SLM* texts would be most appropriate for a critical edition of the 1833 work, if only for the sake of editorial consistency. Finally, if “A Tale of Jerusalem” was originally a Folio Club tale, then Poe dropped it before completing the eleven-story version as we know it. Because this comic story is built chiefly of materials from Horace Smith’s 1828 historical romance *Zillah: A Tale of the Holy City*,³⁰ presumably it was excluded from the 1833 collection after Poe wrote “Epimanes,” imitating a more recent example of Smith’s style.

II

By 1834 the collection had been tentatively accepted by Carey, Lea, & Blanchard, one of America’s most important publishing houses. The chain of events leading to this acceptance began when Poe entered another literary contest shortly after his failure to sell the collection to the *New-England Magazine*. On June 15, 1833, the Baltimore *Saturday Visiter* offered a premium of \$50 for the best tale and \$25 for the best poem submitted before October 1 of the same year; like the *Courier*, the *Visiter* claimed possession of all manuscripts entered. Evidently without immediate hope of finding a publisher and, if anything, poorer than he had been two years earlier, Poe submitted

work for both prizes, risking six stories on the larger. On October 12, 1833, the *Visiter* published a letter from the contest judges announcing the winners; in awarding the fiction prize to Poe's "MS. Found in a Bottle," they noted its selection from a "volume" entitled "The Tales of the Folio Club," adding:

It would scarcely be doing justice to the author of this collection to say the tale we have chosen is the best of the six offered by him. We have read them all with unusual interest, and can not refrain from the expression of the opinion that the writer owes it to his own reputation, as well as to the gratification of the community to publish the whole volume. These tales are eminently distinguished by a wild, vigorous and poetical imagination, a rich style, a fertile invention, and varied and curious learning. Our selection of "A MS Found in a bottle" [sic; the letter as printed gives three different versions of this title, none of which agree with that used when the *Visiter* published the tale in the following issue] was rather dictated by the originality of its conception and its length than by any superior merit in its execution over the others by the same author.³¹

We have Poe's testimony for including "Lionizing" and "The Visionary" with "MS. Found in a Bottle" among these six stories (see the time line below); the titles of the other three remain speculative. John H. B. Latrobe, one of the contest judges, recalled the format of Poe's entry as follows (in 1852 and 1877 respectively):

The loose MSS. [of the other submissions] having been gone through with, I turned to the Book, which contained many tales. . . . The calligraphy . . . was certainly remarkable. It was not *writing*. It was *printing* with a pen.

I noticed a small quarto-bound book that had until then accidentally escaped attention, possibly because so unlike, externally, the bundles of manuscript that it had to compete with. . . . Instead of the common cursive manuscript, the writing was in Roman characters—an imitation of printing.³²

Although Latrobe's memory is not always accurate, we cannot doubt he saw a volume identical in physical appearance to the eleven-story manuscript as we know it from the surviving leaves. It is likely that the six stories Poe submitted to the *Visiter* were from that version of the Folio Club collection, perhaps separated or copied from the very manuscript in question. It seems unlikely, however, that Poe included

any of the Folio Club framework in this selection: the letter announcing his prize does not mention it; and he would hardly risk offending the judges by framing his stories with a burlesque of criticism that would appear to mock their deliberations in advance.

The recommendation that Poe “publish the whole volume” evidently resulted in the following advertisement in the *Visiter* for October 26, 1833, one week after “MS. Found in a Bottle” appeared in its columns:

THE FOLIO CLUB

This is the title of a volume of tales from the pen of Edgar A. Poe, the gentleman to whom the committee appointed by the proprietors of this paper awarded the premium of \$50. The work is about being put to press, and is to be published by subscription—we have a list at our office, and any person wishing to subscribe, will please call. The volume will cost but \$1.

The prize tale is not the best of Mr. Poe’s productions; among the tales of the “Folio Club” there are many possessing uncommon merit.—They are all characterized by a raciness, originality of thought and brilliancy of conception which are rarely to be met with in the writings of our most favoured American authors. In assisting Mr. Poe in the publication of the “Folio Club,” the friends of native literature will encourage a young author whose energies have been partially damped by the opposition of the press, and, we may say, by the lukewarmness of the public in appreciating American productions. He has studied and written much—his reward rested on public approbation—let us give him something more substantial than bare praise. We ask our friends to come forward and subscribe to the work—there are many anxious to see it laid before the public.

This notice, which Poe probably wrote himself,³³ immediately raises a question of reference: was the subscriber offered the eleven-story Folio Club collection or the selection of six tales prepared for the contest? It seems unreasonable to assume that Poe, once released from the strategic demands of the *Visiter*’s competition, would willingly abandon a work that just six months earlier he hoped to sell to the *New-England Magazine*. The advertisement’s claim that “among the tales of the Folio Club there are many possessing uncommon merit” suggests that more than six stories were involved. And the title “THE FOLIO CLUB,” while not explained in the copy here,

makes little sense without the symposium framework, which in this instance Poe presumably had no reason for excluding.

The author quickly abandoned this means of publishing *Tales of the Folio Club*; although disappointing subscriptions and a fight with the *Visiter's* editor (see fn. 5) could have affected his decision, the most likely cause was simply an opportunity to place the work with Carey, Lea, & Blanchard, a publisher commanding national distribution. The following time line summarizes the available evidence of Poe's disappointing negotiations with this firm over the next two years.

October 12 – November 2, 1833. Poe introduced himself to each of the judges of the *Visiter's* contest, most importantly to the novelist John P. Kennedy;³⁴ shortly after October 26 Kennedy evidently agreed to recommend the collection to Carey, Lea, & Blanchard, his own publisher.

November 2, 1833. The *Visiter* announced that "Mr. Poe has declined the publication of his Tales of the Folio Club in the manner stated in our last number. It is his intention, we understand, to bring them out in Philadelphia."³⁵ On the same day, Kennedy noted in his diary: "the prize for the tale we gave to Edgar A. Poe, having selected that call[ed] 'A MS. Found in a Bottle' from a volume of tales furnished by him. The volume exhibits a great deal of talent, and we have advised him to publish it. He has accordingly left it in my possession, to show it to Carey [Henry C. Carey of Carey, Lea, & Blanchard] in Philadelphia."³⁶ Again we should assume, I think, that the "volume" here is the eleven-story version. In print this full collection would have made a rather slight book, and it is hardly probable that Carey, Lea, & Blanchard would consider publishing the much smaller book six of its brief tales would yield.

January 1834. "The Visionary" published by *Godey's* (when Poe submitted this Folio Club tale is not known).³⁷ On the first of this same month, Kennedy included this query in a letter to Carey: "What have you done with Poe's MS?—When will you publish it, and what do you think of it?" The wording here implies Carey had already committed himself to issuing the collection without, however, commenting on its merits or specifying a publication date. A later reference by Kennedy dating this acceptance in the spring of 1834 may be an error in memory (see entry below for April 13, 1835). Carey's reply to the above has not been located, but since his firm suffered major financial losses beginning in February 1834 that drastically curtailed its output of new books for the remainder of the year, presumably any commitment he made at this time had to be postponed.³⁸

Ca. November 19, 1834. Poe wrote Kennedy about his “penniless” condition, adding, “if my situation was stated—as you could state it—to Carey & Lea, they might be led to aid me with a small sum in consideration of my M.S. now in their hands” (L.I:54).³⁹

November 26, 1834. After acknowledging Kennedy’s letter about Poe’s plight on November 21, Carey replied in full that the “book shall go to press at once, but I have much doubt of his making anything by it”; accordingly he refused to advance money because “such little things rarely succeed.” Although willing to print the collection “as it stands,” Carey proposed first “handing the volume to Miss Leslie to see if she could select something for her *Souvenir*, for which he could be paid promptly”; he advised Poe increase the slim possibility of the book’s success by the prior publication of all its tales individually to bring their author’s name to the public’s attention, adding, however, “*that is not often done by short stories.*”⁴⁰

Ca. early December 1834. After Kennedy gave his approval, Miss Eliza Leslie selected “MS. Found in a Bottle” from Poe’s collection. She was at this time editing the first number of a new Christmas annual (entitled *The Gift*, not the *Souvenir*) for Carey & Hart. Technically separate from Carey, Lea, & Blanchard, the firm of Carey & Hart had been organized in 1829 by Henry’s younger brother Edward L. Carey and had offices in the same building as the parent company.⁴¹

December 19, 1834. Unaware of the above events, Poe wrote Kennedy to ask if he had received the “note respecting my Tales of the F. Club” (L.I:55).

December 22, 1834. Kennedy answered by summarizing Carey’s letter of November 26, adding, “My reply was that I thought you would not object to this if the right to publish the same tale was reserved for the volume. He has accordingly sold one . . . to Miss Leslie for the *Souvenir* at a dollar a page, I think, with the reservation above mentioned,—and has remitted me a draft for fifteen dollars” (H.xvii:3).

April 13, 1835. In response to an inquiry from T. W. White, owner of *SLM*, Kennedy strongly recommended Poe as “very clever with his pen—classical and scholar-like,” adding, “I told him to write something for every number of your magazine, and that you might find it to your advantage to give him some permanent employ. He has a volume of very bizarre tales in the hands of Carey and Lea, in Philadelphia, who for a year past have been promising to publish them. This young fellow is highly imaginative, and a little given to the *terrific*. He is at work upon a tragedy

[*Politian*], but I have turned him to drudging upon whatever may make money.”⁴² The first products of Kennedy’s advice were evidently “Berenice” and “Morella,” published in *SLM* for March and April 1835 respectively. Since these tales were almost certainly recent compositions,⁴³ they must have been written independently of the Folio Club framework during the period when Carey, Lea, & Blanchard had possession of Poe’s collection and were still promising to publish it.

April 30, 1835. After receiving a complaint from White about “Berenice,” Poe apologized for the tale’s subject matter, yet insisted that magazines “which have attained celebrity were indebted for it to articles *similar in nature.*” That nature he defined as “the ludicrous heightened into the grotesque: the fearful coloured into the horrible: the witty exaggerated into the burlesque: the singular wrought out into the strange and mystical,” ending with a proposal to furnish White “every month with a Tale of the nature which I have alluded to. . . . This much, however, it is necessary to premise, that no two of these Tales will have the slightest resemblance one to the other either in matter or manner—still however preserving the character which I speak of” (L.I:57–58). As these last sentences show, clearly Poe was preparing White to receive the mannered stories from his Folio Club collection one by one in isolation from their framework, and subsequently nine tales that can be identified as parts of the eleven-story collection did appear in *SLM* beginning with its May 1835 number. Implicit here is Poe’s knowledge that his collection would not appear as a book in the near future. Because at about this time he also regained possession of the Folio Club manuscript (see entry below), it is possible that this letter reflects some decision on the part of Carey, Lea, & Blanchard. Rejection of the collection is one obvious option; another, more likely in light of the publisher’s personal commitment to Kennedy on November 26, 1834, is that Carey extricated himself from an awkward situation in a more equivocal manner, perhaps insisting the firm’s finances precluded publication for an indefinite period and urging Poe again to sell the work’s contents to the magazines. Reinforcing the assumption that some decision was made is evidence indicating Poe called on Carey personally in Philadelphia at approximately this time (at least prior to May 18 and presumably in the interval between April 13 and 30). The logical conclusion that Poe recovered his manuscript and learned of Carey’s position on its publication during this visit may explain why the firm’s Letter Books for this period record no written communications to either Kennedy or the author about the final disposition of the collection.

May 18, 1835. In a letter to Kennedy, Carey noted: “Poe has written me to

say that the tale selected by Miss Leslie has been printed already. That being the case, I should be glad [if] he would send her something good in its stead. Will you say so to him, and say that I would have written him but that his letter is only now received and I am excessively occupied."⁴⁴ As we know from Poe to Kennedy, September 11, 1835, the author evidently discovered Miss Leslie's selection of "MS. Found in a Bottle" during or shortly before his trip to Philadelphia and in response to Carey's note did send "something good in its stead": "I see '*the Gift*' is out. They have published the M.S. found in a Bottle (, the prize tale you will remember,) although I not only told Mr Carey myself that it had been published, but wrote him to that effect after my return to Baltimore, and sent him another tale in place of it (*Epimanes*). I cannot understand why they have published it—or why they have *not* published either 'Siope' or 'Epimanes'" (L.1:74). As we have seen, both "Siope" and "Epimanes" were unquestionably tales in the eleven-story collection. The assumption in this letter of Kennedy's familiarity with these unpublished stories similarly testifies both were included in the manuscript the novelist forwarded to his publisher. It thus seems clear that the collection was returned to Poe in the spring of 1835, for otherwise there would be no need for him to send a copy of "Epimanes" back to Philadelphia from Baltimore. Although the letter above does not state the fact specifically, Poe probably sent "Siope" to Carey along with "Epimanes," for together these tales are approximately equal in length to the amount of copy for which he had originally been paid.

July 20, 1835. Poe sent White the October 12, 1835, number of the *Visiter*, pointed out the judges' letter, and added, "The Tales of the Folio Club have only been partially published as yet. *Lionizing* [SLM, May 1835] was one of them. If you could in any manner contrive to have this letter copied into any of the Richmond Papers it would greatly advance a particular object which I have in view." Poe especially hoped White would insert the letter in *SLM* and suggested how the puff be managed (L.1:65). In light of Carey, Lea, & Blanchard's return of his manuscript, Poe's "particular object" in advertising the Folio Club tales may have been to generate responses that could be cited in future efforts to convince the reluctant publisher to issue the collection (as will be seen in the entry below for September 11, 1835, he had not yet given up all hopes of this possibility). In this same month White's magazine published a revised version of "The Visionary" with a heading concealing its prior appearance in *Godey's*.

Ca. late August, early September 1835. August *SLM* was published (Poe

was in Richmond at this time and helped White put it out);⁴⁵ in it were "Bon-Bon" from the eleven-story collection as well as the puff Poe requested on July 20 with several significant additions: "Lionizing is one of the Tales here spoken of [in the judges' letter from the *Visiter*]—The Visionary is another. *The Tales of the Folio Club* are sixteen in all, and we believe it is the author's intention to publish them in the autumn."⁴⁶ As will be seen, there is strong evidence that this sixteen-story collection was a projected work, the frame for which was certainly not completed at the time this notice was printed. The following entries show that Poe's hope of publishing in the fall must refer to an arrangement with White and not to any change of heart on Carey's part.

September 11, 1835. From Richmond, Poe wrote Kennedy: "Mr. White is willing to publish my *Tales of the Folio Club*—that is to *print* them. Would you oblige me by ascertaining from Carey & Lea whether they would, in that case, appear nominally as the publishers, the books, when printed, being sent on to them, as in the case of H[orse]. S[hoe]. Robinson" (L.I:74). Poe referred here to Kennedy's second novel, which had been printed in Baltimore by John D. Toy during the winter and early spring of 1835. Toy, however, was simply a job printer working on commission for Carey, Lea, & Blanchard, not, as Poe seemed to think, a silent partner in the book's publication.⁴⁷

September 19, 1835. Kennedy replied to the above, "I will write to Carey & Lea to know if they will allow you to publish The Tales of the Folio Club in their name. Of course, you will understand that if they do not *print* them they will not be required to be at the risk of the printing expenses. I suppose you mean that White shall take that risk upon himself and look for his indemnity to the sale. My own opinion is that White could publish them as advantageously as Carey" (H.XVII:19–20). In this exchange, both Kennedy and Poe supposed the Philadelphia firm did not intend to issue the collection in the foreseeable future; on the other hand, the assumption that Carey could even be approached with this scheme implies, as suggested earlier, that the publisher had not absolutely ruled out further consideration of Poe's project.

October 4, 1835. Carey evidently thought he had heard the last of Poe for a while, and the young author's intention of trading upon his firm's imprint obviously appalled him. He replied to Kennedy, "I do not know what to say respecting Poe. Is he not deranged? I should care nothing about aiding him as you propose, but I should like to be sure that he was sane; let me hear from you."⁴⁸ Poe had finally worn out the entrée Kennedy's patronage secured for him.

Two important conclusions emerge from this evidence. First, Carey, Lea, & Blanchard were directly concerned only with the eleven-story version of *Tales of the Folio Club*, which evidently languished in Philadelphia awaiting publication from the time Kennedy forwarded it until the spring of 1835; consequently, the tales Poe wrote during this long interval were almost certainly composed independently of its framework ("Berenice" and "Morella" should be included in this category, along with "Hans Phaall," published in June 1835 and "written especially for the Messenger" according to Poe).⁴⁹ Second, although the evidence is not complete, the Philadelphia publisher apparently never unequivocally rejected the Folio Club collection; thus Poe may have benefited from a long-standing obligation when the firm agreed to publish *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* in September 1839. As could be predicted from this hypothesis, the 1839 agreement was made after Henry Carey had retired from the partnership and involved a very small edition with no payment other than a few bound copies.⁵⁰

The record of Poe's interaction with Carey, Lea, & Blanchard in this period ends with two notes to the author in the firm's Letter Books; when George E. Woodberry printed these notes in his 1909 biography of Poe, his misdating created the persistent myth that the Philadelphia publisher lost one of the Folio Club tales. Properly dated (L.II:571-576, Check List items 108, 123, and November 29, 1836), they read as follows:

November 29, 1835 [1836 in Woodberry]

Mr. EDGAR A. POE,—I have called on Mess. E. L. Carey and A. Hart, who are publishers of "The Gift," and they have examined among all the MS. and cannot find the story to which you allude. They think it very probable that Miss L[eslie]. returned it with the others but it cannot now be found. Should it be hereafter they will return it.

February 20, 1836

EDGAR A. POE, Esq., Richmond Va.—I received your letter this morning, having no knowledge of the MS. mentioned. I applied to Mess. Carey & Hart, who handed over the enclosed which I transmit agreeably to your directions and wish it safe to hand.⁵¹

As Woodberry dated them, these letters suggest that Poe asked for two different stories, the second of which was not found. When read

in the correct order, the notes clearly concern two requests for a single tale that was eventually returned. As the preceding discussion indicates, there are three likely possibilities for the story in question—"MS. Found in a Bottle" (since the Folio Club manuscript was presumably returned to Poe in the spring of 1835 without the tale selected for *The Gift*), "Epimanes," and "Siope." Evidently Carey & Hart initially neglected to send one of these tales back to Poe after *The Gift* was published in the late summer of 1835.⁵²

III

As we have seen, *SLM* for August 1835 testifies to Poe's intention of publishing in the fall a sixteen-story version of *Tales of the Folio Club* on White's presses. Presumably this would have included the eleven tales in the 1833 collection plus "A Tale of Jerusalem," "Berenice," "Morella," "Hans Phaall," and "Shadow. A Fable" (published in September 1835);⁵³ of this group, all but "Siope" and "Raising the Wind" eventually appeared in *SLM*. During 1836, Poe tried three more times to secure a publisher for collections of his stories, the second of which he described as a seventeen-story version of the Folio Club design. No known manuscripts exist, however, from the symposium frameworks for these expanded collections. Indeed, there is good reason to suspect they were projected but never finished efforts to adapt the earlier format to include Poe's growing stock of new tales.

Without support from Carey, White apparently decided not to print the tales himself, but he continued to aid his new editor's persistent attempts to issue them in hard cover. After James Kirke Paulding praised Poe in a letter of December 7, 1835, to White "as decidedly the best of all our going writers," the magazine owner arranged for the New York satirist to recommend a collection of Poe's stories to Harper & Brothers, then in the process of publishing an edition of Paulding's writings.⁵⁴ On March 3, 1836, Paulding informed White that the collection had been rejected:

The[y] have finally declined republishing it for the following reasons: They say the stories have so recently appeared before the Public in the "Messenger" that they would be no novelty—but most especially they object that there is a degree of obscurity in their application, which will prevent ordinary readers from comprehending their drift, and conse-

quently from enjoying the fine satire they convey. It requires a degree of familiarity with various kinds of knowledge which they do not possess, to enable them to relish the joke: the dish is too refined for them to banquet on. . . .

I hope Mr. Poe will pardon me if the interest I feel in his success should prompt me to take this occasion to suggest to him to apply his fine humour, and his extensive requirements, to more familiar subjects of satire; to the faults and foibles of our own people, their peculiarities of habits and manners, and above all to the ridiculous affectations and extravagancies of the fashionable English Literature of the day which we copy with such admirable success and servility. His quiz on Willis, and the Burlesque of "Blackwood," were not only capital, but what is more, were understood by all.⁵⁵

This letter presents problems of reference. The collection Paulding saw seems to have featured the Folio Club framework, for its presence helps explain his metaphor in "the dish is too refined for [ordinary readers] to banquet on," his certainty that Poe's overall intentions in the work were satiric, his complaint that the satire was directed at subjects too unfamiliar for a general audience (the practice of criticism?), and his remark about the "obscurity" of "application" in the tales (to their "authors" in the club not as readily identifiable as N. P. Willis?). On the other hand, the failure to use the title *Tales of the Folio Club*, or specifically to mention the symposium design per se, suggests that Paulding could have seen an unframed collection, perhaps with a preface describing the author's intentions and, because the letter twice mentions republication, openly advertising its contents as a gathering of Poe's remarkably well received *SLM* tales. In the latter case, the collection probably contained the sixteen tales Poe had at hand the previous summer. But because, as will be seen, it is most unlikely that a symposium framework for this large a collection had been completed at this time, any work Poe sent Harpers featuring the Folio Club apparatus must necessarily have been little altered from the form in which Carey, Lea, & Blanchard returned it in 1835, at least in terms of the number of tales it contained.

After learning of the rejection, Poe asked Paulding to show his work to other New York publishers. In his reply of March 17, 1836, Paulding denied the request for personal reasons, suggested Poe try his hand at a novel for Harpers instead, and noted that arrangements

for return of the manuscript had been made.⁵⁶ In June, following a considerable delay in forwarding the collection, Harper & Brothers wrote the author directly with a specific list of reasons for declining its publication:

First, because the greater portion of them had already appeared in print—Secondly, because they consisted of detached tales and pieces; and our long experience has taught us that both these are very serious objections to the success of any publication. Readers in this country have a decided and strong preference for works (especially fiction) in which a single and connected story occupies the whole volume, or number of volumes, as the case may be; and we have always found that republications of magazine articles, known to be such, are the most unsaleable of all literary performances. The third objection was equally cogent. The papers are too learned and mystical. They would be understood and relished only by a very few—not by the multitude. The numbers of readers in this country capable of appreciating and enjoying such writings as those you submitted to us is very small indeed.⁵⁷

If Carey's advice, and not financial necessity, led Poe to sell his Folio Club stories prior to seeking another publisher for the collection as a whole, then the strategy obviously failed. On the other hand, the wording of this letter as of Paulding's leaves open the possibility that Harpers could be judging Poe's tales without the Folio Club framework. In that case, the firm's objections to reprinted magazine stories must have prompted him to return to the Folio Club design in an effort to bolster their appeal in his later approaches to publishers.

On September 2, 1836, Poe tried to interest the Philadelphia publisher Harrison Hall in his stories with a carefully designed letter of inquiry; it began, "At different times there has appeared in the *Messenger* a series of Tales, by myself—in all seventeen [fourteen in fact]. They are of a bizarre and generally whimsical character, and were originally written to illustrate a large work 'On the Imaginative Faculties.' I have prepared them for republication, in book form, in the following manner." He then described the Folio Club format in detail; other than a provision for seventeen club members, this description corresponds fully with the Prologue of the eleven-story framework, adding only a clarification of the means used by the narrator to effect his exposé: "The author of the tale adjudged to be the worst demurs from the general judgment, seizes the seventeen

M.SS. upon the table, and, rushing from the house, determines to appeal, by printing the whole, from the decision of the Club, to that of the public." The "large work 'On the Imaginative Faculties'" is probably a fiction designed to convince Hall that the seventeen tales were not simply miscellaneous productions, although it may accurately reflect one way Poe looked on his original Folio Club collection. Anticipating objections like Carey's to the size of the volume and like Harpers' to reprinted material, Poe emphasized for Hall that the remarks by the Folio Club members, "*which have never been published*, will make about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the whole—the whole will form a volume of about 300 close pages. oct." He also suggested extracts from a "mass of eulogy" received by the tales could be appended to the book as advertising, claimed that Hall had the privilege of receiving "the first offer," and sweetened the bait with a modest bribe: "I shall be happy to review, fully, any books you may be pleased to forward" (L.1:103–104).

Poe's exaggeration of the number of tales he had published in *SLM* implies that this version of the collection was at least inclusive of the fourteen stories that had actually appeared by April 1836 (*SLM* printed no other fiction by Poe until the installments of *Pym* began in 1837); this group was included in the listing earlier in this essay of the sixteen tales Poe probably had available in late summer of 1835. Without additional evidence, the title of the seventeenth tale added to the collection by September 1836 must remain conjectural.⁵⁸ Hall's reply has not survived, but obviously it was negative. Poe probably had his manuscript in circulation when he wrote this letter, for by the beginning of October it had received an encouraging reading from the recently opened New York branch of Saunders and Otley (an English publishing firm doing battle with Harpers over the American practice of pirating foreign books).⁵⁹ The evidence of this transaction unambiguously shows that Poe's letter to Hall described a projected text, for Saunders and Otley saw a collection in progress and still far from completion.

As in the approach to Harpers, White again helped Poe find an intermediary, enlisting the aid of Edward W. Johnston, a Southern scholar from South Carolina College and a contributor to *SLM* who was living temporarily in New York.⁶⁰ In a letter to White dated October 4, 1836, Johnston provided Poe with a progress report on

his negotiations with Saunders and Otley. The firm was interested in publishing Poe's tales in both America and England but could not make the final decision in New York. The publishers had therefore requested that the author supply them a finished manuscript to send to England as soon as possible. Johnston informed them that he was certain Poe was not sufficiently near completing the work in final form to insure a quick delivery and urged them to return the manuscripts in their possession immediately in order to facilitate the task facing the author.⁶¹ Although Johnston does not mention a title in this letter, the unfinished portion of a manuscript containing the tales available to Poe at this time could only be the Folio Club framework. Thus by the fall of 1836 Poe had still not completed (if indeed he had ever begun) the revisions necessary to adapt his 1833 format to accommodate extra tales, for although Johnston's letter probably refers to a seventeen-story volume such as Hall was offered, clearly its manuscript required more work than the addition of one tale to a finished sixteen-story framework would entail. Whether Poe decided to meet the demand for rapid completion of his project is not known.⁶² The press of duties at *SLM* would have made the task difficult, even had he not devoted time to *Pym* in this period. If Poe did finish the volume, then his hopes may have died with the company, for Saunders and Otley disbanded its New York branch sometime in 1837. Frederick Saunders, who established the American operation and presumably read Poe's manuscript, did remain in the city as an independent bookseller and publisher but obviously did not issue the collection.⁶³ And to present knowledge, Poe made no further efforts to place this or any other gathering of his stories before approaching Carey's former partners with *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* in 1839.

To summarize briefly, evidently Poe only projected the sixteen-story Folio Club collection announced for fall 1835, submitted the eleven-story version (or an unframed volume) to Harper & Brothers early in 1836, and in late summer or early fall of that year probably sent Saunders and Otley a set of seventeen tales and a proposal such as Hall received for their "republication in book form." The possible causes for Poe's apparent failure to complete the expanded Folio Club experiments are several. His move from Baltimore to Richmond not only disrupted his personal life but also burdened him

with the labor of editing and writing for a monthly magazine. The problems of fitting miscellaneous tales into the 1833 framework and of orchestrating debate among sixteen or seventeen different characters may have proved insurmountable. And after practical experience as a literary critic, he may have found his 1833 "burlesque upon criticism" was inadequate and therefore faced the necessity of rewriting all of his earlier frame material.

The implications of this study for our understanding of Poe's early fiction need not be labored. The author apparently began writing short fiction with a sequence of stories designed for individual Folio Club members to deliver in symposium, turning specifically to composing tales for separate magazine publication only after completing his 1833 experiment. While that work was in the limbo of Carey, Lea, & Blanchard's backlog, Poe worked on *Politian* and, with Kennedy's urging, tales for *SLM* that would "make money." Thus the Folio Club design forms the relevant context for interpreting the eleven stories in the 1833 volume as well as "A Tale of Jerusalem" but not, however, "Berenice," "Morella," or "Hans Phaall." Because the expanded versions of *Tales of the Folio Club* probably existed only as hopeful proposals to publishers, the common practice of identifying the latter three tales as Folio Club stories because they would have been included in these projected works can only be misleading. The case of "Shadow. A Fable" and the mysterious seventeenth story is more ambiguous, because both could have been composed while Poe was planning, if not executing, these expanded collections. Without support from additional evidence, however, speculation about the probable role of any of these later tales in the symposium framework seems a dubious enterprise at best, particularly in light of the continuing debate over Poe's intentions in stories that can be assigned to his 1833 satire.⁶⁴

NOTES

1. This parallel glosses over several individual variations: Hawthorne, for example, consigned most of *Seven Tales of My Native Land* to the fire; and Poe gambled twice with stories belonging to his Folio Club collection on literary contests.
2. For Hawthorne, see Nelson F. Adkins, "The Early Projected Works of Nathaniel Hawthorne," *PBSA*, 39 (1945), 119-155; Richard P. Adams, "Hawthorne's Provincial Tales," *NEQ*, 30 (1957), 39-57; and Neal Frank Doubleday, *Hawthorne's Early Tales: A Critical Study* (Durham, N.C., 1972). For Poe, see T. O. Mabbott, "On Poe's 'Tales of the Folio Club,'" *SR*, 36 (1928), 171-176; James Southall Wilson, "The Devil Was in It," *American Mercury*, 24 (1931), 215-220; Q:191-204, 212-217, 745-746; William Bittner, *Poe: A Biography* (London, 1962), pp. 288-292; Floyd Stovall, *Edgar Poe the Poet: Essays New and Old on the Man and His Work* (Charlottesville, Va., 1969), pp. 55-63; Alexander Hammond, "A Reconstruction of Poe's 1833 *Tales of the Folio Club*: Preliminary Notes," *PoeS*, 5 (1972), 25-32; and G. R. Thompson, *Poe's Fiction: Romantic Irony in the Gothic Tales* (Madison, Wis., 1973), ch. III.
3. L.I:20.
4. "Letter to Mr. _____," *Poems, Second Edition* (New York, 1831), p. 15.
5. The fight was with John Hill Hewitt, editor of the newspaper sponsoring the contest; his poem "Song of the Winds," contributed under a pseudonym, was selected over Poe's only after the latter's tale was awarded the fiction prize; see William F. Gill, *The Life of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York, 1878), p. 69, and Vincent Starrett, "One Who Knew Poe," *The Bookman*, 64 (1927), 196-201.
6. Consult documentation in author's "A Reconstruction of Poe's 1833 *Tales of the Folio Club*" and "'Lionizing' and the Design of Poe's *Tales of the Folio Club*," *ESQ*, 18 (1972), 154-165; unless otherwise indicated, future references to the 1833 collection and its stories should be assumed to cite these articles or the scholarship summarized in them.
7. M.I:544.
8. I am indebted to Professor Richard P. Benton for this suggestion; for Poe's knowledge of this work and its popularity, see Burton R. Pollin, "Figs, Bells, Poe, and Horace Smith," *PN*, 3 (1970), 8-10.
9. L.I:53, 104.
10. For an example, see the reading of Milton in "The Literary Life of Thingum Bob, Esq.," H.VI:7.
11. Michael Allen, *Poe and the British Magazine Tradition* (New York, 1969), pp. 16ff.
12. H.II:xxxix.
13. In "The Musiad" (Baltimore, 1829) is the following reference to Poe's poetry:
" 'Say! did not Billy Gywnn [sic], the great, combine/
With little Lucas to put down thy line?' If the Delphian Club was not moribund in 1829, then criticism of "Al Aaraaf" by William Gwynn, its last president, and Fielding Lucas, another member, may have supplied Poe with the germ for the Folio Club's

treatment of its newest initiate. For a discussion of "The Musiad" and a different reading of these lines, see Stovall, pp. 64-101.

14. Northrop Frye, *Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays* (Princeton, N.J., 1957), pp. 39-40, 226-227.
15. See the discussions of Menippean satire in *Anatomy of Criticism*, pp. 308-312, and in Alvin Kernan, *The Cankered Muse: Satire of the English Renaissance* (New Haven & London, 1959), pp. 12ff.
16. *Fraser's Magazine*, 1 (1830), 506-507.
17. V.iii-ix, 3-6. For a thorough discussion of the Baltimore phase of Poe's literary career, see Stovall, pp. 18-63.
18. Stovall, p. 58.
19. Lambert A. Wilmer, *Merlin, Together with Recollections of Edgar A. Poe*, ed. T. O. Mabbott (New York, 1941), p. 29.
20. *Saturday Visiter*, August 4, 1832, p. 3; I am indebted to Mrs. Nancy Boles and Mrs. Evelyn Paxton for aid with the file of the *Visiter* in the holdings of the Maryland Historical Society.
21. Stovall, p. 58, n. 99.
22. Frank Luther Mott, *A History of American Magazines 1741-1850* (Cambridge, Mass., 1957), p. 602.
23. L.I:55.
24. See reproductions of Poe's letter in Q:200, and of the second Folio Club leaf inaccurately reproduced in John W. Robertson, *Bibliography of the Works of Edgar A. Poe* (San Francisco, 1934), II, insert after p. 114.
25. H.II:xxxv. I wish to thank Rodney G. Dennis, Curator of Manuscripts at the Houghton Library, and Randolph W. Church, State Librarian, and J. W. Dudley, Assistant State Archivist, at the Virginia State Library, for aid in my examination of these manuscripts. It should be noted of the text of the Folio Club Prologue in H.II:xxxvi-xxxix, that "hare" in the epigraph is a misprint for "nare," that "at" should not be cancelled and "debut" should be italicized in the third paragraph, and that the punctuation throughout has been regularized.
26. "On Poe's 'Tales of the Folio Club,'" p. 176.
27. A pott sheet (12½ by 15½ inches) yields quarto leaves of 6¼ by 7¾ inches.
28. In "A Reconstruction of Poe's 1833 *Tales of the Folio Club*," pp. 29-30, I suggested that Mr. Blackwood would contribute only a section of "Loss of Breath" that was "more typically a 'Blackwood article'" than the tale as a whole; this argument was based on an erroneously narrow view of *Blackwood's* fiction. The 1832 version of this story ("A Decided Loss") adapted the hero of *Blackwood's* pseudo-scientific tales of terror to the picaresque mode of Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*; G. R. Thompson identifies this source in *Poe's Fiction*, p. 49. Poe's revisions made "A Decided Loss" into a more generally representative composite of *Blackwood's* fiction by adding not only an account of the hero's sensations (the gallows scene and immediate aftermath) characteristic of its tales of terror but also a comic episode (the scene with Wind-enough in the tomb) in the punning, bantering manner of the magazine's

burlesque stories, such as Robert Macnish's "Man with the Mouth" (May 1828) and "The Man Mountain" (March 1829) and J. F. Dalton's "It's very Odd" (January 1829). Mr. Blackwood Blackwood's doubled name makes him an appropriate author for this composite tale, which features a narrator and antagonist who are inverse doubles.

29. Ruth Hudson traces the journey of this elegant room in "Poe Recognizes 'Ligeia' as His Masterpiece," *English Studies in Honor of James Southall Wilson* (Charlottesville, Va., 1951), pp. 35-45.
30. Wilson, p. 218. Wilson's citation of *Zillah*'s subtitle is inaccurate; "A Tale of Jerusalem" was, however, the running head for J. & J. Harper's pirated American edition of the novel.
31. Quoted in John C. French, "Poe and the *Baltimore Saturday Visiter*," *MLN*, 33 (1918), 257-267, which gathers the basic documents from the contest.
32. Quoted from Jay B. Hubbell, "Charles Chauncey Burr: Friend of Poe," *PMLA*, 69 (1954), 838, and John H. B. Latrobe, "Reminiscences of Poe," in *Edgar Allan Poe: A Memorial Volume* (Baltimore, 1877), p. 58. Latrobe's recollection that "A Descent into the Maelström" was one of the tales in Poe's submission is obviously wrong. See the dates of that story's known sources in Arlin Turner, "Sources of Poe's 'A Descent into the Maelstrom,'" *JEGP*, 46 (1947), 298-301, and W. T. Bandy, "New Light on a Source of Poe's 'A Descent into the Maelstrom,'" *AL*, 24 (1953), 534-537.
33. Poe and John Hill Hewitt, the *Visiter*'s editor, are the possible authors of this notice (also reprinted, although incorrectly punctuated, in French, "Poe and the *Saturday Visiter*," p. 262). Since Hewitt participated in the "opposition of the press" to Poe's *Al Aaraaf* (Stovall, p. 37), he was hardly likely to have written the advertisement as it stands.
34. Hubbell, p. 839.
35. French, p. 262.
36. Quoted in Killis Campbell, "The Kennedy Papers," *SR*, 25 (1917), 197.
37. Quinn, p. 204, speculates that Poe's personal connection with the son of Mrs. Sarah J. Hale may have helped him place this story, but Mrs. Hale did not edit *Godey's* until 1837. See Mott, pp. 580, 583.
38. Excerpt from a.l.s. John P. Kennedy to H. C. Carey, January 1, 1834, quoted by permission of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, where it forms part of the Edward Carey Gardiner Collection. Carey's financial troubles are detailed in David Kaser, *Messrs. Carey & Lea of Philadelphia: A Study in the Booktrade* (Philadelphia, 1957), pp. 55-56.
39. Stovall, p. 59, n. 103, accurately quotes a note Kennedy added to a copy of this letter identifying Poe's "M.S." at Carey & Lea's as "Tales of the arabesque &c." Kennedy had the copy made for Griswold early in the 1850's (see Campbell, p. 198, and L.I.:55; II:671-672; copy now in the Boston Public Library), and the note is in his hand from that period. Clearly he confused the title of the collection with *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* of 1839 when trying to clarify this letter for Griswold.
40. Campbell, p. 197.

41. Kaser, pp. 47–48; see also Ralph Thompson, *American Literary Annuals and Gift Books 1825–1865* (New York, 1936), pp. 51, 74. Carey was simply confusing the new annual with his firm's *The Atlantic Souvenir* that had been sold to S. G. Goodrich of *The Token* in 1832. Carey & Hart's *The Gift* bore that name from at least December 18, 1833, when contributions at large were invited in *The National Gazette and Literary Register*, XIII, no. 4003, p. 3. There is evidence that H. C. Carey may have forwarded Poe's money as early as December 8; see John Carl Miller, *John Henry Ingram's Poe Collection* (Charlottesville, Va., 1960), p. 169, item 395.

42. Quoted in George E. Woodberry, *Life of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York, 1909), I, 109–110.

43. In December 1835 Poe stated about the stories that had appeared in *SLM* to that date, “The last tale I wrote was Morella and it was my best. . . . What articles I have published since *Morella* were all written some time ago” (L.1:78). This statement also applies by implication to “Berenice,” which preceded “Morella” in *SLM* by one issue.

44. Campbell, p. 198.

45. David K. Jackson, *Poe and the Southern Literary Messenger* (Richmond, Va., 1934), pp. 97–98.

46. *SLM*, 1 (August 1835), 716.

47. See entries for Toy and Kennedy in *The Cost Book of Carey & Lea, 1825–1838*, ed. David Kaser (Philadelphia, 1963). The publisher's Letter Book for 1834–35 in the Historical Society of Pennsylvania reveals that Kennedy's novel was printed in Baltimore at his request to facilitate the proofreading chores.

48. Campbell, p. 198.

49. For dating this tale, see William H. Gravely, Jr.: “A Note on the Composition of Poe's ‘Hans Pfaal’,” *PN*, 3 (1970), 2–4; and “A Few Words of Clarification on ‘Hans Pfaal’,” *PoeS*, 5 (1972), 56. The manuscript of this tale in the Pierpont Morgan Library conforms in its script and appearance to the Folio Club fragments, but its pages are uniformly $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch wider, and its pagination does not suggest it was numbered in sequence with other tales in a larger work.

50. Woodberry, II, 375–376. Carey retired in October 1838, after which the firm's imprint became simply Lea & Blanchard—Kaser, *Messrs. Carey & Lea*, p. 63.

51. Woodberry, II, 375.

52. Collation suggests that “MS. Found in a Bottle,” *SLM*, 2 (December 1835), 33–37, which bears the heading “*From ‘The Gift’*,” was not in fact set in type from its printed text in that annual. While Carey & Hart's house style and Poe's revisions could make it possible for one manuscript to be the immediate antecedent of both texts, their differences make it seem unlikely. This manuscript may thus be the one that was misplaced.

53. For a discussion of “Shadow. A Fable” as a story in the manner of the Folio Club tales, see Burton R. Pollin, “Light on ‘Shadow’ and Other Pieces by Poe; Or, More of Thomas Moore,” *ESQ*, 18 (1972), 166–173.

54. *The Letters of James Kirke Paulding*, ed. Ralph M. Aderman (Madison, Wis., 1962), pp. 170–173.

55. Ibid., pp. 173-174. Wilson, p. 218, protests that Paulding must have missed the whole point of the Folio Club stories to advise Poe to turn his satire upon "fashionable English Literature," but clearly Paulding was singling out for praise one kind of tale that Poe's collection did contain, suggesting that more of the same would improve the work's appeal (if the framework was present, the implicit point is that the satire directed at the practice of criticism would be wasted on most readers). The "Burlesque of 'Blackwood'" was undoubtedly "Loss of Breath." Both "Lionizing" and "The Duke de L'Omelette" are frequently proposed candidates for the "quiz on Willis." In the 1833 collection, only the latter involved Willis while "Lionizing" was directed at Benjamin Disraeli; however, in early 1836 Paulding had ample reason for taking "Lionizing" as a hit at Willis; see the scholarship cited in Thompson, *Poe's Fiction*, pp. 216-217, n. 7, 9.

56. *Letters of Paulding*, pp. 177-178.

57. Quoted in Q:251.

58. "Von Jung, the Mystic" (1837) seems a possibility because of its dating; see Burton R. Pollin, "Poe's 'Mystification': Its Source in Fay's *Norman Leslie*," *MissQ*, 25 (1972), 111-130.

59. Arno L. Bader, "Frederick Saunders and the Early History of the International Copyright Movement in America," *Library Quarterly*, 8 (January 1938), 25-39.

60. Jay B. Hubbell, *The South in American Literature, 1607-1900* (Durham, N.C., 1954), p. 217 et passim. An article by Johnston appears in *SLM*, 2 (October 1836), 677-684.

61. I am grateful to the Librarian, Mrs. June Moll, and the Committee on the Use of Literary and Historical Manuscripts at the Miriam Lutcher Stark Library, of the University of Texas at Austin, for making a facsimile of this letter available to me.

62. Eugene Exman, *The Brothers Harper* (New York, 1965), p. 81, suggests that the rejection letter from Harpers led to Poe's recalling of the work from Saunders and Otley; Exman's chronology is wrong, as is his conclusion.

63. Bader, "Frederick Saunders," p. 37.

64. See for example Stovall, pp. 55-57, on James Southall Wilson's view of the Folio Club stories; Thompson, *Poe's Fiction*, pp. 53-65; Benjamin Franklin Fisher, "Poe's 'Metzengerstein': Not a Hoax," *AL*, 42 (1971), 487-494, on "Metzengerstein"; and Claude Richard, "Les Contes du Folio Club et la vocation humoristique d'Edgar Allan Poe," *Configuration critique d'Edgar Allan Poe* (Paris, 1969), pp. 82-87; and William Goldhurst, "Poe's Multiple King Pest: A Source Study," *TSE*, 20 (1972), 107-121, on "King Pest."

Poe's "Diabolical" Humor: Revisions in "Bon-Bon"

JAMES W. CHRISTIE

POE learned to write a short story by burlesquing popular magazine fiction, but critics pay too little attention to his own early potboilers. Most discussions of the apprentice fiction deal with those pieces that foreshadow the mature tales of terror and ignore the clearly comic ones, although these slighter works were the first printed and the most frequently revised.¹ A careful examination of each published form of one such effort, "Bon-Bon" (originally "The Bargain Lost"), reveals Poe's success with comedy and his transformation into a competent craftsman in short fiction.² Always attentive to the extravagancies of contemporary magazinists, Poe casually poked fun at Faustian tales of diablerie and the Gothic thriller in "The Bargain Lost." In the later versions he manipulated playful observations with what proves to be his characteristic narrative persona: a literary and intellectual poseur. This linguistic narcissist enabled him to transform "Bon-Bon" from a random display of puns and witty remarks to a unified farce.³ Poe relates a devil tale in an affected manner, but with enough hints of a sinister power behind the fun to remind us of the diabolical nightmares he often invokes.

"The Bargain Lost" first appeared in the December 1, 1832, Philadelphia *Saturday Courier*, the last of five stories Poe had presumably written during the fall of 1831 for that newspaper's literary contest. Changing the title, he reprinted a markedly revised form in *SLM* (August 1835), possibly submitting the version from the "Tales of the Folio Club" collection offered to the *New-England Magazine* in May 1833. Making minor changes for the next appearances, he included it in *TGA*, and as the third of his tales published in *BJ* (April 19, 1845)—that version reappearing a final time in the Philadelphia daily morning paper, *Spirit of the Times* (July 22 and 23, 1845).⁴

"Bon-Bon" and the other *Courier* satires were written and revised over a fourteen-year period, but critics regard them as no more than a "comic interlude in Poe's work between the poetic creativity of his

youth and the more professional writing of his maturity," or overwritten comic exercises that fail without "footnoting."⁵ True, Poe turned from poetry to fiction as a stopgap financial measure, and, drawing from his extensive reading, filled his tales with esoteric references and topical "quizzes."⁶ Even his knowledgeable literary friend James Kirke Paulding found he could not market the early works because "there is a degree of obscurity in their application, which will prevent ordinary readers from comprehending their drift, and consequently from enjoying the fine satire they convey." As for the endless revisions, a modern critic like Stuart Levine dismisses them in his otherwise helpful study of Poe's magazine environment: "When pressed for copy, he would re-run material previously published elsewhere, generally editing it in the process."⁷

The revisionary evolution of "Bon-Bon" demonstrates that Poe very early worked to create that "vital requirement in all works of Art, Unity."⁸ The result is a comic version of the mature fantasies such as "The Fall of the House of Usher" and "The Masque of the Red Death" where "the immediate goal of reverie's winding passages is that magnificent chamber in which we find the visionary hero slumped in a chair or lolling on an ottoman, occupied in purging his consciousness of everything that is earthly."⁹ In this early farce with a "lolling" hero, Poe mocked the radical split between spirit and matter that later became such a compelling concern. The greatest changes occurred between 1832 and 1835, when he made extensive additions to establish character and narrative authority and omitted details that might have been considered inappropriate. Thereafter, he deleted more than he added, making changes but not structurally extraordinary ones.

Our tale, like "The Duc de L'Omelette," which was also first published in the *Courier* in 1832, is Poe's satiric response to the rage during the 1820's and 30's for tales in which a gentlemanly Satan appears to bargain for men's souls. "Bon-Bon" also glances at the idealistic thinking of German philosophers much read at the time.¹⁰ The protagonist of "The Bargain Lost" is a Venetian metaphysician named Pedro Garcia, a man of enormous intellectual stature (we learn that he influenced Kant) though only four feet, five inches tall. Pierre Bon-Bon, the later hero, is French and a *restaurateur*, as well as a philosopher. He is only three feet tall, and his height is surpassed

by the girth of his “immense stomach,” a by-product, no doubt, of his dual profession. In all versions, the hero begins in the fold of a Gothic thriller, visited by the devil on a “dark and stormy night.”¹¹ The two drink, and the devil, a real gourmet of souls, discourses on their nature. He himself wants only the best, and prefers them “vivente corpore” rather than “pickled.” Both heroes seek to sell their souls to the devil, but Bon-Bon possesses a characteristic that Garcia does not—the “foible,” the inordinate desire to “never let slip an opportunity of making a bargain . . . a trade of any kind, upon any terms, or under any circumstances.”¹² Always the gentleman, particularly in the joke conclusion that ends all versions, the devil has less interest in a bargain than does his victim. He refuses the soul of a man who, being a philosopher, knows nothing about souls, and who is also so drunk that he cannot be considered capable of entering into a binding contract.¹³

The plot sequence remains the same, but the tone changes in “Bon-Bon,” as does the treatment of the central joke upon which both stories turn. The narrative styles are as different as the introductory sentences. “The Bargain Lost” opens directly: “At Venice, in the year ——, in the street ——, lived Pedro Garcia, a meta-physician.” Then follow a hurried picture of Pedro and a description of his inclusive, “Pedronist” philosophy. With this introduction his only excuse, Poe puns and plays with language in a manner that has little to do with the situation or the story. For example, he employs revolutionary times so that he can comment in a witty conversational aside about the manner in which Pedro carries on: “. . . it was with little concern that, in certain boilings of the pot revolutionary, (during which, saith Machiavelli, the scum always comes uppermost) he beheld his large estates silently slipping through his fingers.” Equally offhand and colloquial is the narrator’s disclaimer of his intention to describe Pedro’s dress of comic motley immediately after he has done just that: “All this and more—had I been a novelist—might I have detailed. But, thanks to St. Urbino, whatever I am, *that* am I not. Therefore upon all these subjects I say ‘mum’.” The narrator continues to debunk both Pedro and the devil in order to crack any joke; he describes Pedro’s calm state of mind upon learning of the devil’s visit as quite different from his feelings at “the visitation of a spider, a rat, or a physician.”

In contrast to this vigorous style by the narrator is the sophisticated and convoluted opening of “Bon-Bon”: “That Pierre Bon-Bon was a *restaurateur* of uncommon qualifications, no man who, during the reign of ——, frequented the little Cafe in the cul-de-sac Le Febvre at Rouen, will, I imagine, feel himself at liberty to dispute.” Our attention is immediately drawn to the narrator’s rarefied style and interests. He speaks as if in an ongoing conversation with a reader appreciative of a hero who is the best product of a highly developed civilization: “At any epoch it would not be very wonderful if a humor so peculiar as the one I have just mentioned [Bon-Bon’s “foible”] should elicit attention and remark. At the epoch of our narrative, had this peculiarity *not* attracted observation, there would have been room for wonder indeed.” Justified by the shift from Venice to Rouen and by Bon-Bon’s additional expertise as *restaurateur*, Poe adds a profusion of foreign phrases, a catalogue of culinary delights, and an impressive list of philosophical essays *sur la Nature*, *sur l’Ame*, and *sur l’Esprit*. As do the narrators of much of Poe’s mature fiction, this one assumes a coterie of readers at ease with all his allusions. Poe always looks to a reader “sufficiently learned to comprehend or to laugh at the presumptuous erudition which the tales affect with such mock seriousness.” The topics mentioned would greatly interest that “diabolical association” of Folio Club members who meet over wine and dinner to hear and criticize “Bon-Bon.”¹⁴

What Poe refines as he rewrites the story is his parody of the elitist *Blackwood’s* formula, particularly “the air of exclusiveness and authority which had characterised the Reviews; it incorporated the curious and esoteric learning which was a feature of the more respectable older miscellanies . . . but it fused these elements into a more relaxed, personal, and intimate ethos which permitted the inclusion of more blatant sensationalism, literary gossip, and fiction for the less erudite reader.”¹⁵ Much of the narrator’s pretension results from his philosophical interests and scholarly style, characteristics essential for instruction in “How to Write a *Blackwood Article*” (1838). A master of the inside-dopester tone, and fluent in French, the narrator in “Bon-Bon” does more elegant extemporizing and less crackberry-jesting than the pundit in “The Bargain Lost.” Although no less ridiculous, the revised story aims at playing endless variations on

one theme, the good “taste” of Bon-Bon and the devil, and consequently exploits more fully the meeting with the devil that follows. The narrator’s refined sensibility is crucial for developing this punning joinder of philosophical and culinary expertise.

Poe considerably alters the appearance and “taste” of both the philosopher-hero and Satan himself. Pedro Garcia is, after all, a captive of the exotic tastes of Disraeli and others for whom elegance is something like the interior of Pedro’s room: “All around from the ceiling fell tapestry-hangings of the richest crimson velvet. The ceiling, itself, was of brown and highly polished oak, vaulted, carved, and fretted, until all its innumerable angles were rounded into a dense mass of shadow, from whose gloomy depth, by a slender golden chain with very long links, swung a fantastic Arabesque lamp of solid silver.”¹⁶ His elegantly bound and illuminated books scattered on luxurious settees, “having every appearance of the ottomans of Mahomet,” add to the bizarre refinement.

By contrast, the scrupulous “Bon-Bon” narrator describes a hero and his room where knowledge and food are one’s only concern, and in fact are identical.¹⁷ For a great philosopher, who is all stomach, the restaurant is only a low interior space where everything attests to its dual functions as “kitchen and *bibliothèque*”: “A dish of polemics stood peacefully upon the dresser. Here lay an oven-full of the latest ethics—there a kettle of duodecimo *mélanges*. Volumes of German morality were hand and glove with the gridiron—a toasting fork might be discovered by the side of Eusebius—Plato reclined at his ease in the frying pan—and contemporary manuscripts were filed away upon the spit.” Everything is absurdly balanced. Bon-Bon’s discriminating taste characterizes, “at one and the same time, his *essais* and his *omelettes*.” As his doubled last name indicates, our hero offers a sweet solution for the coexistence of body and soul, and a great temptation for the devil.¹⁸

Although Poe’s characterization of the devil always identifies some comic grotesquerie,¹⁹ “The Bargain Lost” presents Satan as a lusty eccentric, wearing a Roman toga over a shirt and tie of contemporary fashion. He carries with him a crimson, luminescent bag that contains his ledger of condemned souls. During his discussion of the quality of souls he has eaten, he licks his lips and wags his tail, but Pedro overlooks these manners not befitting a gentleman. All the

subsequent versions depict the devil as resembling an impoverished clergyman, both scholarly and sinister. He is very tall and thin, and wears an old and faded suit, in a style current in the early eighteenth century. In his breast pocket, he carries a small black volume entitled *Rituel Catholique*, which later turns out to be the *Registre des Condamnés*. Poe also hints at the devilish parts that are barely concealed by the ecclesiastical disguise: the fang-like teeth, the misshapen feet, “the tremulous swelling about the hinder part of his breeches,” and the swishing coattail. The 1845 version adds a top hat “maintained lightly upon his head,” presumably to cover the horns, although it retains the 1835 phrase describing the devil’s head as bald with a long oriental-style queue in back. These leisurely circumlocutions of the revised versions emphasize a venerable and courteous stranger with traces of diabolical nature, not the rogue of “The Bargain Lost.” By 1835, Poe appears to have had a greater familiarity with contemporary devil tales, particularly those by Robert Macnish in *Blackwood’s* and J. F. Dalton (author of “Peter Snook”) in various magazines.²⁰

One important detail not found in this fiction and added to the 1835 version is that the devil has no eyes and wears “green spectacles.”²¹ As Mabbott first noted, these spectacles seem to be a link between the tale as it was revised for inclusion in the 1833 “Tales of the Folio Club” and the probable teller, De Rerum Naturâ, Esqr. In his study of the relations between the Folio Club members and their tales, Alexander Hammond argues that the devil is the narrator, writing about himself in the third person in very complimentary terms. The presence of that consummate gourmet in such company is ironic; he could make some telling points in the drunken disputes with other members about their uses of the devil. Whether or not Poe intended the irony of having Satan comment on himself when he published the story without the critical disputes and elaborate framework of the Folio Club, he did lavish much attention upon the devil’s character and thus tightened the tale. The Satanic Majesty is a far more varied and interesting character than the dandified figure in “The Duc de L’Omelette” or the Biblical demon in “Siope—A Fable,” two more candidates for the “Tales of the Folio Club.” During the discussion of philosophers, the devil maintains that he is Epicurus and, as a seeker of fine pleasures, he rejects Bon-Bon’s

tasteless bargain-hunting. That he is the Greek philosopher adds irony, for his philosophy that the soul may be eaten is “a comic embodiment of the argument of *De rerum natura* that the soul is composed of atoms and is therefore material.”²²

Once the descriptions of the philosopher, his surroundings, and the devil have been established, “Bon-Bon” evidences a fairly high degree of correspondence to “The Bargain Lost.” The chief difference is that the original conversation between the antagonists, though it remains ludicrous, makes wonderful farce when we know that the hero is a chef:

“Yes, sir, my soul is particularly calculated
for—for—a stew, damme!”

“Ha!”

“A ragout—”

“Eh?”

“A fricassee—”

“Ah!”

(1832)

Satan’s description of the philosophers eaten, how each tasted, and the superlative merits of the Greeks is also clearer with the presence of such a delectable listener as Bon-Bon.

Ultimately he is in the same tongue-tied and increasingly drunken state at the end of the story as was Pedro. Bon-Bon’s contribution to dialogue consists of a series of incomplete and failed expressions punctuated by a distressing case of “hiccups.” Satan becomes, however, more threatening and also magnificent as he talks to the philosopher in a Faustian scene of demonic glee that continues the burlesquing of Gothic conventions within this tale for gentlemen:

. . . the devil, dropping at once the sanctity of his demeanour, opened to its fullest extent a mouth from ear to ear, so as to display a set of jagged and fang-like teeth, and throwing back his head, laughed long, loudly, wickedly, and uproariously, while the black dog, crouching down upon his haunches, joined lustily in the chorus, and the tabby cat, flying off at a tangent, stood up on end and shrieked in the farthest corner of the apartment.

Later this “sightless” devil demonstrates his power by convincing Bon-Bon that the cat instinctively knows of his presence (as animals traditionally do) and that he can read its mind: “She has just con-

cluded that I am the most distinguished of ecclesiastics, and that you are the most superfluous of metaphysicians."

More conventionally diabolical in 1835, the devil is also more convincing as a philosophical gentleman who spurns Bon-Bon's offer. During his extended discussion of philosophers, he declares that he gave Aristotle his "one divine mortal truth . . . that by sneezing men expelled superfluous ideas through the proboscis," that he had to correct Plato, and that, as we have seen, he was Epicurus. Although using this dialogue to mock all philosophy, at least that spoken where *in vino veritas* prevails, Poe does make one significant deletion to avoid offending good taste and disrupting the lighthearted diablerie of this piece. In recounting purchases of the souls of living people, the devil notes that "There was Cain, and Nimrod, and Nero, and Caligula, and Dionysius, and Pisistratus, and—and the Jew—and—and a thousand others, all very good men in their way." In 1835, he deleted "the Jew" from the list of those who had sold their souls to him.²³ If "the Jew" is meant to be Christ, Poe probably felt it was going too far to include Him in that company.

By 1835, Poe was nearly satisfied with the form of the tale, as he was with the other *Courier* satires that he revised for *SLM*. In the last two appearances of the story he attempted to eliminate redundant expressions, modify those phrases badly overwritten, and generally alter details that exaggerated the wrong kind of comic playfulness. Textual changes in 1840 involve a few verbal revisions, some corrections of the French, and a transliteration of a Greek phrase from English back into Greek.

In *BJ* (1845), Poe made significant verbal revisions, in addition to correcting mechanical errors of spelling and punctuation. On occasion, he added a phrase or sentence to expand a piece of comic erudition. For example, after the statement, "In his opinion the powers of the intellect ["mind" in 1835 and 1840] held intimate connection with the capabilities of the stomach," he added: "I am not sure, indeed, that he greatly disagreed with the Chinese, who hold that the soul lies in the abdomen. The Greeks at all events were right, he thought, who employed the same word for the mind and the diaphragm." One other interesting addition occurs at the very end where the devil rebuffs Bon-Bon for what he suggestively calls "your present situation." Poe substituted "your present disgusting

and ungentlemanly situation" to make more forceful Satan's own gentlemanly outrage at having been tempted and then forced to leave empty-handed.²⁴

Chiefly, however, the later revisions tightened the form of the story. As with other tales reprinted in the journal where Poe gained his greatest editorial independence, he frequently cut or shortened words and phrases. He changed "found himself entirely nonplussed" to "found himself nonplussed," and, describing the devil, changed "tinctured with grotesque diablerie" to "tinctured with diablerie" and the "dead level of cadaverous flesh" to "dead level of flesh." He also deleted a long list that first appeared in 1835 of wines standing on the philosopher's cupboard, but retained other references in that version not found in "The Bargain Lost" alluding to Bon-Bon's love of wine.²⁵ Dropping this list eliminates the only major detail that does not share in the punning conjunction of wisdom and wine.

Although not striking, these later changes are evidence of Poe's great admiration for a tale begun in his apprentice years and reshaped until 1845, the last extensive revision.²⁶ "Bon-Bon" was not one of the "articles" mentioned in the Preface to *TGA* for which Poe sought to "claim indulgence on the score of hasty effort" (p. 8), but one on which he probably relied to market those tales that each member of the Folio Club was required to read "to the company assembled over a glass of wine."²⁷

Studying the textual revisions, we see how Poe early in his career learned to subordinate many humorous elements to a single design, if not a single effect, by establishing the authority of a narrator. Using a pedantic, slightly pompous speaker with a "quick sense of propriety," he develops at some length the absurdities he compressed and mixed randomly in "The Bargain Lost." He builds a farce, lightly satirizing the excrescences in magazine fiction, but more interested in playing with the conventions of popular writing than in condemning them. The Faustian compact, normally the occasion for a Gothic plunge into unconsciousness and a dream of infinite freedom, becomes a joke that joins the dreaming psyche to the bodily senses. By attending to the evolution of this tale, we can appreciate Poe's creation of a refined, jocular manner for treating the absurd. He widened the focus of his lighthearted tale of diablerie to

include those ingredients of Gothic terror he himself was later to manipulate so well in his horrific fantasies.

NOTES

1. Poe's purely comic tales are relegated to a low place in the canon of his works because of the steady attack by critics who write about "Poe's always-deplorable humor," to quote Robert Martin Adams, *Nil: Episodes in the Literary Conquest of Void During the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1966), p. 41. As Stephen L. Mooney observes in "The Comic in Poe's Fiction," *AL*, 33 (1962), 433: "Few critics . . . have found in Poe an unusually comic vein. The pathological, the hysterical, the phantasmagorial, the unspeakable have all been meticulously explored and over-exposed, but the comic has been largely ignored."
2. Most of the attention paid to "Bon-Bon" and the other early satires focuses on Poe's sources or the framework and contents of the "Tales of the Folio Club." Ruth Hudson's unpublished dissertation, "Poe's Craftsmanship in the Short Story," University of Virginia, 1935, contains a study of the sources for "Bon-Bon" and a very helpful descriptive bibliography of the revisions. Alexander Hammond deals with "Bon-Bon" at some length in what is the most thorough account of the "Tales of the Folio Club" to date in his unpublished dissertation and an article summarizing that work: "Edgar Allan Poe's 'Tales of the Folio Club,'" Northwestern University, 1971, and "A Reconstruction of Poe's 1833 *Tales of the Folio Club*," *PoeS*, 5 (1972), 25-32. Among other works that discuss "Bon-Bon," see Thomas O. Mabbott, "On Poe's 'Tales of the Folio Club,'" *SR*, 26 (1928), 171-176; James S. Wilson, "The Devil Was in It," *American Mercury*, 24 (1931), 215-220; Q:194; and G. R. Thompson, *Poe's Fiction: Romantic Irony in the Gothic Tales* (Madison, Wis., 1973), p. 47.
3. I have received the greatest help in dealing with the early tales from the suggestions of Professor Fisher and "The Short Story as Grotesque," in D, which reminds us that "These tales are indeed 'poems,' and Poe always remained a poet even when he was contributing some of his most uninspired narratives to the periodicals . . ." (p. 154).
4. My text of "A Bargain Lost" is the facsimile reprint in V:50-63. The 1845 *BJ* appearance of "Bon-Bon" and collations of the 1835 and 1840 versions are in H.II:125-146 and 348-353. I compare Harrison's details of revisions of the 1840 text with the Dolphin Master edition of *TGA* (Gloucester, Mass., 1965), pp. 92-108, and the 1845 *BJ* text with the AMS Press reprint (New York, 1965), I:243-247.
5. Floyd Stovall, *Edgar Poe the Poet* (Charlottesville, Va., 1969), p. 57; Thompson, p. 53.
6. On Poe's financial problems, see Q:307ff., and D:136. For a good discussion of the sources for and "quizzes" in the *Courier* tales, see Thompson's chapter, "Flawed Gothic."

7. These quotations are respectively from Letter of Paulding to White (March 3, 1836), H.17:377, and Stuart Levine, *Edgar Poe: Seer and Craftsman* (De Land, Fla., 1972), p. 120.
8. "The Poetic Principle," H.xvi:267. As Robert D. Jacobs remarks, "The rule of unified effect was in Poe's system applicable to all purely literary genres except the novel. . . ." in *Poe: Journalist and Critic* (Baton Rouge, La., 1969), p. 319.
9. Richard Wilbur, "The House of Poe" (The Library of Congress Anniversary Lecture, May 4, 1959), rpt. *The Recognition of Edgar Allan Poe: Selected Criticism since 1829*, ed. Eric W. Carlson (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1966), p. 268.
10. Hudson describes a number of French tales that set the fashion and imitative English tales that might have influenced Poe, pp. 366-412. See also Maximilian J. Rudwin, *The Devil in Legend and Literature* (Chicago, 1931; rpt. New York, 1970), pp. 217-219, and Thompson, p. 47.
11. "The Bargain Lost," p. 53. Poe's "It was a dark and stormy night" is identical to the opening sentence of a latter-day Gothic novel, Bulwer's *Paul Clifford* (1828). He kept the Gothic note, but changed the phrasing in later versions.
12. We learn of this weakness, along with Bon-Bon's "propensity" for wine early in the story; whereas in "The Bargain Lost" we do not learn of Pedro's love of bargains and strong drink until the devil is actually present, telling Pedro about past bargains.
13. In his chapter "The Devil-Compact in Tradition and Belief" (pp. 176-178), Rudwin finds that the devil insists upon meeting all formal requirements before entering into a contract, and always fulfills his legal obligations.
14. These quotations are respectively from D:143, and Introduction to "The Tales of the Folio Club," H.II:36.
15. Michael Allen, *Poe and the British Magazine Tradition* (New York, 1969), p. 23.
16. In "Poe and Disraeli," *AL*, 8 (1937), 413, Ruth Hudson shows how these extravagant details burlesque the sumptuous interiors in Disraeli's *The Young Duke*. Thompson cites the similarity between the interiors and those of the hero in Disraeli's *Vivian Grey*, p. 220, n. 31.
17. Poe uses the knowledge-food equation once more, in an 1835 review for *SLM*: "Men can no more read everything than they can eat everything; and the *petit plats* that are handed round hot-and-hot, leave us no room to do honor to the roast beef of old England, nor to the savory Virginia ham. But these are the food by which the thews and sinews of manhood are best nourished, they at once exercise and help digestion. Dyspepsia was not of their day. It came in with French Gastronomy. Are we mistaken in thinking that we see symptoms of a sort of intellectual dyspepsia arising from the incessant exhibition of the *bon bons* and *kickshaws* of the press? Well, here is something that will stick by the ribs" (H.VIII:15).
18. Poe does continue his antitheistic mockery by once again naming his hero "Peter" after St. Peter, that divine magistrate who determines the destination of souls, and by having him offer the devil wine in an ironic twist on the Communion service.
19. In addition to the two *Courier* tales, the devil appears in person in two other

comic tales, “The Devil in the Belfry” (1839) and “Never Bet the Devil Your Head” (1841). Stephen L. Mooney, “Comic Intent in Poe’s Tales: Five Criteria,” *MLN*, 76 (1961), 432–434, uses the appearance of the devil as one of the signals helpful for distinguishing Poe’s comic from his serious work. See also James J. Lynch, “The Devil in the Writings of Irving, Hawthorne, and Poe,” *NYFQ*, 8 (1952), 111–113; and William Goldhurst, “Poe-esque Themes,” *Papers on Poe: Essays in Honor of John Ward Ostrom*, ed. Richard P. Veler (Springfield, Ohio, 1972), pp. 126–127.

20. See Hudson, “Poe’s Craftsmanship,” pp. 384–397. In Macnish’s “The Metempsychosis” (1826), the devil is addicted to bargaining.
21. Rudwin makes this point in his notes to “Bon-Bon,” *Devil Stories: An Anthology* (New York, 1921), p. 296.
22. Hammond, “A Reconstruction,” p. 28.
23. For one other obnoxious reference to a “Jew” that Poe deleted in the 1841 revision of a comic article first printed in *SLM* (February 1836), see Alexander Hammond, “The Hidden Jew in Poe’s ‘Autobiography’,” *PN*, 2 (1969), 55–56.
24. This change, and many others that were incorporated into the *BJ* version, Poe first made by marking his copy of *TGA*, a volume available in the Rare Book Room of the University of Pennsylvania.
25. This list appears later in the 1835 version of “Lionizing.” See L. Moffitt Cecil, “Poe’s Wine List,” *PoeS*, 5 (1972), 41–42.
26. He even twice altered the epigraph. In 1832, he chose a comic thrust at philosophers from *As You Like It*; in 1835, he replaced it with a short quotation from Voltaire, the mysterious “A” (Arouet was Voltaire’s real name) whose signature is on the agreement the devil produces; and, in *BJ*, settled on a French vaudeville, a fitting introduction for a French tale of philosophers, devils, and wine.
27. Introduction to “The Tales of the Folio Club,” H.II:37.

The Power of Words in Poe's "Silence"

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN FISHER IV

I

THE haunting prose of "Silence—A Fable" has teased critics since its original appearance as "SIOPE—A FABLE [*In the manner of the Psychological Autobiographists.*]," in *The Baltimore Book*, one of many ephemeral literary annuals of the early nineteenth century. It subsequently reappeared in 1840 (*TGA*) and 1845 (*BJ*: September 6), and Poe's revisions, albeit few, are important and will be examined below. They indicate his developing artistry because the tale moves from undeniable pastiche—with obvious dependence upon sources—into subtler refinements that show what so occupied Poe: the terror not of Germany, or literary Gothicism, but of the soul. Surveying textual commentary about and critical approaches to the tale reveals confusion, downright inaccuracies, and uneasy analyses—which customarily manifest themselves by cursory bypassings of "Silence."

Three critical remarks supply differing attitudes. First, an anonymous review of the original 1837 appearance:

This fable, if we reck it right, is intended to indicate the horror of silence, —that man may not be entirely accursed while he can hear the sounds which hurtle in the bosom of nature; the curse of tumult is represented as happiness to the curse of silence. The strain is wild, the language beautiful and peculiar to Mr. Poe.

Second, another anonymous commentator, noticing *TGA*: "Siope and The [sic] MS. Found in a Bottle" afford good specimens of the author's stronger and more graphic powers." Finally, a modern critique, by G. R. Thompson:

"Shadow" (1835) and "Silence" (1837), under their mystic and "poetic" and flawed surfaces, in substance and style seem to be parodies of pseudo-poetic transcendental fictions, especially those of Bulwer-Lytton, De Quincey, and the "psychological autobiographists" (Disraeli's *Contarini Fleming* was first subtitled *A Psychological Auto-Biography*) indicated in Poe's subtitle to "Silence." . . . "Silence" develops the theme of a decep-

tive and illusory world, with shrieking water lilies, lowing hippopotami, graven rocks whose letters change. At the end, a Demon laughs hysterically at a confused human being, while a lynx stares steadily at the Demon's face. That the lynx is a symbol of the ironic vision peering unflinchingly into the face of perversity is corroborated by Poe's lynx metaphor in *Marginalia*. "It is only the philosophical lynxeye that, through the indignity-mist of Man's life, can still discern the dignity of Man."

Thompson adds that "Silence" and others he has been discussing as representing the comic-ironic side of Poe "are the 'Gothic' tales, published in the *Southern Literary Messenger* from 1835 to 1837, that Poe intended to include in the burlesque Folio Club series. . . ."¹

The quotations make evident the indecision abundant in criticism of "Silence," although the contemporaneous pair show that early readers discovered no humorous intent. Thompson of course has stressed that we must read Poe anew, even if his own readings often elicit negative responses. My study presents accurately the MS. fragment of "Silence" and some theories about how the evolving texts emphasize an even greater serious intent on Poe's part. To proceed in the Biblical vein so obvious in the tale, the last shall be first, and I place next the printing of the manuscript.²

II

[61]

forest, and up higher at the rustling Heaven, and into the crimson moon. And I lay close within shelter of the lilies and I observed the actions of the man. And the man trembled in the solitude—but the night wan-ed and he sat upon the rock.

And the man turned his attention from the Heaven, and looked out upon the | dreary river Zaire—and upon the yellow ghastly waters, and upon the pale legions of the water-lilies. And the man listened to the sighs of the water-lilies and to the murmur that came up from among them. And I lay close within my covert, and I observed the actions of the man. And the man trembled in the solitude—but the night wan-ed and he sat upon the rock.

Then I went down into the recesses of the morass, and waded far in among the wilderness of the lilies, and called unto the hippopotami which dwelt among the | fens in the recesses of the morass. And the hip-popotami heard my call and came with the behemoth unto the foot of the rock, and roared loudly and fearfully beneath the moon. And I

lay close within my covert and observed the actions of the man. And the man trembled in the solitude—but the night waned and he sat upon the rock.

Then I cursed the elements, and a frightful tempest gathered in the Heaven where before there had been no wind. And the Heaven became livid with the violence of the tempest—and the rain beat upon the | head of the man—and the floods of the river came down—and the river was tormented into foam—and the water-lilies shrieked within their beds—and the trees crumbled before the wind—and the lightning flashed—and the thunder fell—and the rock rocked to its foundation. And I lay close within my covert, and I observed the actions of the man. And the man trembled within the solitude—but the night waned, and he sat upon the rock.

Then I grew angry and cursed with a silent curse the river, and the lilies, and the wind, and the | forest, and the Heaven, and the thunder, and the sighs of the water-lilies. And they became accursed—and *were still*. And the moon ceased to totter in its

[62]

pathway up the Heaven—and the thunder died away—and the lightning did not flash—and the clouds hung motionless—and the waters sunk to their level and remained—and the trees ceased to rock—and the water-lilies sighed no more—and the murmur was heard no longer from among them—nor any shadow of sound throughout the vast illimitable desert. And I looked upon the characters of the | rock, and they were changed—and the characters were SILENCE.

And mine eyes fell upon the countenance of the man—and his countenance was wan with terror. And he raised his head from his hand, and stood forth upon the rock—and listened. But there was no voice throughout the vast illimitable desert, and the characters upon the rock were SILENCE. And the man shuddered—and turned his face away—and fled afar off—and I saw him no more.

Now there are fine tales in the volumes of the Magi—in the iron-bound melancholy volumes of the Magi. | Therein, I say, are glorious histories of the Heaven, and of the Earth, and of the mighty Sea—and of the Genii that over-ruled the Sea, and the Earth, and the lofty Heaven. There was much lore too in the Sayings which were said by the Sybils—and holy, holy things were heard of old by the dim leaves that trembled around Dodona—but as Allah liveth that fable which the Demon told me, as he sat by my side in the

Tell me of often at the rustling leaves, how into the unknown roads
Ana I lay close within shelter of the boughs and I observed the actions of
the man. And the man trembled in the solitude — and the night winds
whispered Ana he sat upon the rock.

And the man turned his attention from the boughs, and looked
out upon the faraway river — and I lay close within my covert — and
the moon the pale reflector of the water-bodies. And the man listened to
the sighs of the water-bodies. And so the man went to the bank of the river,
Ana I lay close within my covert and I observed the actions
of the man. And the man trembled in the solitude — and the night
winds whispered Ana he sat upon the rock.

Then I went down into the recesses of the meadow, and walked far
in among the whiteness of the fields, and came within the appropriate
angle where among the boughs in the recesses of the meadow. And the dog
spotted me near by and came with the boughs into the foot of
the rock, and roared lowly Ana breathing beneath the moon. And I
lay close within my covert and observed the actions of the man. And
the man trembled in the solitude — and the night winds whispered Ana he sat
upon the rock.

Then I cursed the elements, and a mighty tempest gathered in the
air as never before there had been of wind. And the Heaven burst
forth with the violence of the tempest — and the rain beat upon the heads
of the man. And the flood of the river came down — and the river
was transformed into foam — and the water-spirits gesticulated within their
bouts — and the trees crumpled before the wind — and the lightning
flashed — and the thunder roared — and the rock rolled with its howl.
And I lay close within my covert and I observed the ac-
tions of the man. And the man trembled within the solitude
and the night winds whispered Ana he sat upon the rock.

Then I grew angry. And turned with a silent curse the river,
the boughs, and the wind — and the ocean, and the clouds, and
the thunder, and the sighs of the water-bodies. And I lay close
within my covert — and the night winds were still. And the sun rose
over the land — and the world was still.

and by the robes — and the fingers which hung — and the hands hung motionless — and the robes, such as they were, had nothing upon them but these robes to hold them, and the robes were far from mere — and the atmosphere was death, or else there among them were not any vestiges of sound throughout the vast, lifeless desert. And "looked upon the skeletons of the past, and they were changed — and the skeletons were SILENCE."

And mine eyes turned to the countenance of the man — and his countenance was wan with terror. And he raised his hand from his head, and stood forth upon the rock — and silent. But still no voice throughout the vast lifeless desert, and the silence upon the rock were SILENCE. And the man remained alone — hence, his face wanly — and fled afar off — and I saw him no more.

Now there are fine tales in the volumes of the Magi — in the iron-bound melancholy volumes of the Magi. Therein, I say, are glorious histories of the Heaven and of the Earth, and of the mighty Sea — and of the Devil that overrules the Sea, and the Earth, and the lofty Heavens. There was much here God in the Savings who were vain of the Spirit — and here, many things were scarce of old by the dim leaves that trembled around, — and out at Akaz live the said Fable which the Demon told me. As he sat by me, I sat in the shadow of the tree some 20 feet off, — I held it as the most wonderful of all. And as the Demon made an end of his story, he fell back within the cavity of the bough, and vanished. And I tried, but could not, laugh with the Demon — and he caused me because I could not, laugh. And the Fox which dwelt in the hollow by the bough came out from his hole and lying down at the foot of the Demon looked at him soberly in the face.

shadow of the old tomb at Balbec, I hold to be the most wonderful of all. And | as the Demon made an end of his story he fell back within the cavity of the tomb and laughed. And I tried, but could not laugh with the Demon—and he cursed me because I could not laugh. And the lynx which dwelleth in the cavern by the tomb came out from his lair, and lying down at the feet of the Demon looked at him steadily in the face.

III

The text above is a portion of Poe's projected 1833 "Tales of the Folio Club," which never appeared. The MS., a single leaf with writing on both sides, measures roughly quarto size, being 6 by $7\frac{5}{8}$ inches—just slightly smaller, because of trimming, than that for the Introduction to the Folio-Club text, now at the Houghton Library, Harvard University. It is numbered pages 61 and 62, and its opening corresponds, generally, with the seventh paragraph (that is, beginning about halfway through) of the final published version, and continues to approximate the printed texts, although the differences will be pointed out. The paper is white wove, aged to a creamy or ivory color.

IV

Advocates of latent satire upon Transcendentalism in "Silence" must give way when we recall that the impact of that school, particularly of its American branch, was not felt until after the first publication of the tale. Because "Silence" was written between 1831 and 1833, we must discount such speculation and turn instead to resemblances between the prose and some of Poe's own verse, keeping in mind some other inspirations as well. If the tale was originally intended as an obvious quiz upon Edgar Poe, the youthful poet of melancholy themes and settings, as Hammond reasonably suggests, it also contained elements that lift it from the realms of pure satire and parody. It departs from techniques and the general tone of tales like "Lionizing," "Loss of Breath," and "How to Write a Blackwood Article," which number among Poe's earlier, overtly comic ventures.

Among the members of the Folio Club "Silence" may have appeared as an evident piece of orientalism of the English Romantic-Early-Victorian variety. It might also have reminded them of the verse of Edgar Allan Poe, the little man in black. The so-called

overdone, luscious prose might have been meant to approximate a drunkard's irregular speech, because the Introduction to the whole work particularly mentions eating and drinking, and several of Poe's other early tales feature drunkenness or near-drunkenness as part of their appeal. "King Pest," "The Duc de L'Omelette," "The Assignation," and "Lionizing" are such pieces, laying the groundwork, one might say, for such subsequent fictions as "The Cask of Amontillado" and "Hop-Frog," in which alcohol leads to far more horrifying consequences. One subtle aspect of "Silence," then, may be that it is told, or read, by one of an increasingly irresponsible, wine-sodden group, although, detached from such a context, it can stand on its own merits as a symbolic drama of a tortured human self, one who cannot elude his Demon, or his irrational, destructive side, a part of the self that exists close to the animal potential within all of us (witness the lynx) and just as close to death, implicit in the "shadow of the tomb." Poe's revisions strengthen one's impression that "Silence" is more than easily dismissable froth.

Traces of Bulwer, Coleridge, De Quincey, as well as of Poe himself, do figure in the backgrounds of "Silence," but other origins may be detected; we must consider these backgrounds because they probably relate to several revisions. Poe's tale also keeps good company among the "Fables," "Allegories," "Parables," and "Sketches" that overflowed the pages of then-popular periodicals, gift books, and annuals. Its orientalism is another stock in trade of the same market, and, considering the wealth of other oriental items in *The Baltimore Book*, we understand that the young author did not err when he directed "Silence" to its editors. Long ago, that indefatigable quarrier after Poe's sources, Killis Campbell, asked (strangely enough for one so steeped in such backgrounds): "And whence could he have drawn the conception of such a story as 'Silence'?" With Poe's appropriations from it recorded elsewhere, one probable reply is "Moore's *Byron*," although others, the Bible among them, are just as likely. If within the confines of the Folio Club "SIOPE—A FABLE" had comic perspective, it may have had several ramifications as yet unnoticed. Poe's fascination with "demons" is evident in other early writings, such as "Alone," "Metzengerstein," and "The Assignation," and one can only wonder if Byron's letter to Murray (December 27, 1816), opening "As the demon of silence seems to have possessed

you,”—which phrasing lies in close proximity to remarks about ruins and “poetical desolation”—may partially have inspired the writing of “Silence.” Shortly before, moreover, Byron stresses the decay and desolation of the so-called Tomb of Juliet, which he visited in Verona, as well as that of Venice, concluding: “But I have been familiar with ruins too long to dislike desolation.” With Poe’s admiration for Byron well known, the latter’s remarks about *Childe Harold* III: “It is a fine indistinct piece of poetical desolation, and my favorite,” may also contribute to “Silence.” With revision, however, the tale becomes less a quiz and more a dramatized version of the bombardment and disintegration of a psyche, less an eastern travel tale in the Byron-Bulwer mode, and instead a delineation of those realms “out of SPACE—out of TIME” so dear to Poe.³

In so brief a piece, the alterations of title, subtitle, motto, as well as a deft rearrangement of several verbal structures, assume more than casual importance. Poe’s methods of prose fiction link with those usually considered the hallmarks of verse. Even an ever-so-slight shift in punctuation may reshape meaning, as attested in the meticulous attention to like matters by a kindred spirit, A. E. Housman, fanatically proofreading his tiny poems. Poe’s procedures in “Silence” “charge” the meaning of what remains with additional suggestiveness or undercurrent—just the sort of excellence he recommended for a truly great tale. A convolute plot is not essential; “Silence” is as striking a vision as that other early, scantly plotted tale, “The Visionary,” later “The Assignation.” Sound and sense coalesce neatly in this recitation to make it even more of a dream fiction than is the tale of intrigue and passion in Venice, and the revisions highlight the dreaminess.⁴

The Demon tries with cleverly orchestrated sound effects, as much as by, or more than by, visual lures, to enchant his listener, our narrator. That the Demon does not wholly accomplish his task, but that he *does* manage to instill an inescapable uneasiness into his quarry is only too clear as “Silence” closes. Like Egaeus in “Berenice,” the narrator in “Silence” has delved deeply into *outré*, literary pursuits, and, like Egaeus and the protagonist-narrator in “MS. Found in a Bottle,” his soul ultimately becomes as ruinous as the spectacle he is shown. Not accidentally does “Silence” end in shadow and keep the narrator firmly subordinated to the Demon and lynx. He, the nar-

rator, has become nothing; that is, he has been so lured from normal, everyday reality that he now exists in a mental-spiritual void, comparable to the desolation pictured by the Demon. The auditory effect in the tale is hypnotic if it is read aloud, as Poe thought poetry should be, and as much fiction also was at the time. So far as I can comprehend it, the ultimate result is not comic. Witness the replacement of the flowery “litten” by “lighted” in describing the moonlight upon the characters in the rock. The first word is hokey De Quincey or Coleridge, the second is good sense in a tale now out of the Folio-Club context. Poe may have written in a manner that readily reminded his contemporaries—and later readers—of Bulwer, Disraeli, De Quincey, and Coleridge, but perhaps the criticism by the Folio-Club hearers, not “Silence” itself, would have run into burlesque and “dunderheadism.” If the tale were intended for the little man in black as Poe, it may have been composed primarily to draw attention to his early verse as misunderstood works of art rather than to satirize them or those writers just named. That Poe’s awareness of his own methods may have produced a measure of caricature within the Folio-Club framework is not unthinkable, because in this respect he and his later but fellow poet Swinburne knew their craft so well that they could pillory it. We recall, too, that Poe’s attitude toward his art grew ambivalent at times.⁵

The title and epigraph changes possibly dissuade readers from seeing too obvious sources. The first epigraph is from Poe’s own “Al Aaraaf”: “Quiet we call *Silence*—which is the merest word of all.” In subsequent appearances, the alteration of “SIOPE—A FABLE” to “Silence—A Fable” and the epigraph to “The mountain pinnacles slumber; valleys, crags, and caves *are silent*,” from a fragment of Greek verse by Alcman, are significant. Both revisions reveal that the drift is away from spotlighting Poe himself (if we agree with Hammond that “Siope” may first have meant “is Poe”) and toward a broader implication throughout the tale. The later title may also suggest the eradication of an initial “piquancy” of the sort Mr. Blackwood praised to the Signora Psyche Zenobia. If Poe intended to leave punning and potential hoaxing behind, then the confusing Greek title (Siope—transliteration of Greek ‘silence’) becomes extraneous and diminishes the effect of his ever-desired representative fine brief tale. The lines of Alcman become more functional, rein-

forcing Poe's objections to mottoes that did not point the way toward the main intent in a tale or poem (H.VIII:125–126), and link more tightly to what follows than "Al Aaraaf" had, playing subtly upon the double strands of aural-visual content. The 1845 text also dispenses with the subtitle, as if to indicate our writer's departure from such popular influences upon his juvenilia as Disraeli's novels.

Clearer functionalism appears too in the deletion or muting of specific geographical references, or indeed of most tangible referents. For example, the verbose opening of 1837 includes "There is a spot upon this accursed earth which thou hast never yet beheld. And if by any chance thou *hast* beheld it, it must have been in one of those vigorous dreams which come like the Simoom upon the brain of the sleeper who hath lain down to sleep among the forbidden sunbeams —among the sunbeams, I say, which slide from off the solemn columns of melancholy temples in the wilderness." Cutting this passage produces not just greater concision, so far as the rudiments of prose composition go, but plunges readers more quickly into the midst of the intense drama of the self, which I think is central to "Silence." Although the tale might be read as yet another bit of hackneyed orientalism for average readers, what with the references to Libya and the river Zaire, excising "the old tomb at Balbec," (which had appeared in the manuscript, but not in any published version), eliminates actual geographical location while it leads away from Poe's earlier writings. An ancient ruined city famous for pagan sun worship, Balbec had already appeared in "Al Aaraaf" and "MS. Found in a Bottle"; hence the author probably wanted to clean out this too detectable echo of his own work, as well as to create an increasingly less realistic "world" for intensifying the sense of desolation and alienation noticed by both Demon and narrator in this eerie alternation between horrifying noises and the more horrible silence. The removal of the sunshine lighting the temples would heighten this shadowy, obscure vision. In the familiar dream structure of a Poe tale, the move from reality, as symbolized by the specific eastern regions mentioned at the opening to a nongeographical destination at the end, is perfect artistry. The narrator completely enters a visionary world, then awakens.

Even though much sensational sound is mentioned—the wind, the thunder, the hippo roars, and the laughter—it is told rather than cast

into dialogue or direct discourse. In other words, “Silence” is decidedly a narrated tale, framed by a device akin to that in “MS. Found.” It is a retrospective vision, but one sufficiently compelling to drive the narrator to relate it, after the manner of Coleridge’s famous old mariner, Byron’s versifying storytellers, or Poe’s own Montresor. If it is a recounting of exaggerated horrors, which may be overdone solely because they drive the narrator into incoherence, it is an incoherent *confessionalism*, intensely personal in nature. Perhaps our narrator only imagines that a real, blue-fire Gothic Demon related these wild, weird events, and the bracketing of this narrative with those in the Magian chronicles may indicate our tale-teller’s own sense of uncertainty (and the consequent implication of the tale’s being at a remove from himself proper as he nears his conclusion). Such uncertainty complements the movement of the earlier sections, shot full of dashes and other punctuation to force careful attention because of the weird sights and strange language, by hearer or reader.

“Demon” begins with a capital *d* fairly consistently,⁶ as if this creature were a personification of some emotional force, such as Hope, Memory, and Love, which populate allegorical writing—in spite of Poe’s strictures about such techniques. He is never described, but exists only as a voice to create word-pictures for his listener, who, like the man of the Demon’s tale, seems cursed into silence. Hence “his” tale is told for him by the Demon. This creature may, ironically, resemble the God, with the “G” always in uppercase, of the King James Bible in creating a “world” for his listener. A linked irony is the change of “Deity,” describing the man in 1837, to “deity”—which ever-so-slight alteration may be evidence for our seeing the Demon as essentially evil, with none of the vitality that “daemonic” might imply. If he, a probable psychological symbol, is so designated as to make him more credible for his double, the narrator, then he must embody deep implications for his other self, and, as such, could hardly be humorous within the context of the tale. The narrator cannot share his laughter about desolation and emotional harrowing. Another Biblical facet, not unreasonably enhanced by the Demon-deity spellings, is that this Demon resembles Satan in his role as Christ’s tempter. Like that devil, he exercises his wiles to ensnare his victim, by creating a hypnotically musical “poem” that simultaneously persuades the ear of his listener and reveals a scene of

visual desolation and spiritual vacuity. Poe anticipates the vein mined by Swinburne, whose poems often lull so much with their “music” that readers fail to penetrate to the underlying themes of pain and fear.⁷

It is worth noting here that in the second printing of “The Visionary” (*SLM*, July 1835) the “Demon” of Romance becomes “Genius,” and that the second version of “MS. Found” also alters “[the phantom ship] rose up, like a demon of the deep” to just plain “rose.” Evidently, Poe does not consider casually his concept of demonism, but seems to reserve the terminology for representing evil and fearful, not comic, phenomena. Noteworthy, too, is the refashioned final glimpse by the Demon of his man. The MS. runs: “and I saw him no more,” but in 1837 this becomes “and I beheld him no more,” which, finally, stands: “so that I beheld him no more.” The trite conjunction departs as a more Biblical verb replaces the equally humdrum “saw.” The impossible stylistics that some readers attribute to “Silence” do not, it appears, represent merely the *jeu d'esprit* of a parodist, out for the hides of Bulwer, De Quincey, & Co. A similar achievement of precision occurs in the closing lines. The lynx of the MS. “came out from his lair, and lying down at the feet of the Demon, and looked at him steadily in the face.” In print that same Lynx “came out therefrom, and lay down at the feet of the Demon, and looked at him steadily in the face.” The consistency in tense improves, and, more important, the rhetorical shift creates an echo, by the narrator, of the Demon’s phraseology. So, the Demon’s impact is powerful; he tells a story, and his listener in consequence “speaks,” or perhaps more strictly within the Folio-Club environs, reads in imitative language. The mood, however, suggests no comedy, no parody.

Another reshuffling in the text supports my contention. The conclusion to the sixth paragraph in 1837 reads: “And the moon shone upon his face, and upon the features of his face, and oh! they were more beautiful than the airy dreams which hovered about the souls of the daughters of Delos!” Such splendid beauty is inconsistent with the man’s state as he flounders amongst the dreary regions outlined by the Demon; hence, the portrait becomes “and, in the few furrows upon his cheek I read the fables of sorrow, and weariness, and disgust with mankind, and a longing after solitude.”

Most obviously, facile lyricism departs from this passage; the alliterative effect is inessential here. It gives a cast of effeminacy to this man who is a “deity,” but a deity brought low by an evil tormentor. Reducing the echo of “characters” (H.I:223; 1:32) by substituting “then” also alters a bit of clumsy repetition, a practice notable as well in the condensation, through revision, of the opening paragraph. The baneful effects of such yearning for isolation from regular human communality are also too quickly realized in the man’s reaction to desolation and silence. His state parallels that of our narrator, who cannot laugh, and finally, who cannot even respond directly to the darker side of his own nature, but exists in an emotionally barren limbo, and places the tales of the Magi, as it were, between himself and the Demon’s tale. What originally may have been jibes at the creations of young Poe the versifier become through careful revision the influence of a threatening aspect of self.

A reader may begin to go round in circles because of the characterization in “Silence.” The man in the Demon’s vision may be a mirror image of the narrator, considering that both are left shattered emotionally by the end, one in frantic flight, the other in torpid meditation, but do these multiple reflections or segments of one’s self offer deliberate parody of reality, as, say, the Henry IV of Pirandello’s play does? Given the Old Testament tone, which seldom deals in crackling humor, I think not. Our narrator is isolated, within his own morbidity, and alienated (he is alone, or so it would seem). Contrary to some views, he is neither absurd nor primarily a caricature, but he *is* lonely.⁸ Where he is and where he has been matters little, because anyone could experience a similar psychological isolation were he to journey far enough within himself, and encounter his own “Demon.” Removing the tangibles and other signposts of the concrete, such as those already noticed, makes more of a psychological drama out of this one-time pastiche. The “tomb” is nonspecific enough as it stands at the last to show Poe’s move from magazine to psychological Gothicism. The conclusion to “Silence” is emotionally correct; after the imaginative journey through the Demon’s land of terror—into some frightening recesses of the soul—no better destination could be reached than the “shadow of the tomb.” This phrase, rather than the manuscript reading, may indicate Poe’s arrival by 1837 at some principles of solider stature, beyond those of the mere parodist, if indeed

such *were* his earliest main intentions. The “hero” in “Silence” adumbrates such later characters in the Poe gallery as Montresor (whose tale also provides us with plenty of laughter of a mirthless sort), as well as the greatest Gothic hero of them all in American Literature: Melville’s Ishmael. Taking away geographical particularity from the tomb, Poe intensifies its psychological dimension, making it akin to the foreboding November in Ishmael’s soul. It is not so important that we move from the Libya and Congo River (Zaire) of the original *Baltimore Book* text to another global location (Balbec); what counts is the slackening of the moorings of mental balance and stability. Poe could create the converse; that is, he could emphasize realism and tangibility where it contributed strength to the desired effect. For instance, the novice Poe wrote in MS.: “—and the lightning flashed—and the thunder fell.” Wisely, he changed the printed phraseology to “and the thunder rolled—and the lightning fell.” Sound and sense improve in the revision because the “roll” of this thunder is onomatopoetic, and lightning literally does fall, as well as flash. Its falling about the terrified victim of the Demon’s wrath is far more calculated to engender terror in his and in the narrator-listener’s soul.

In a “fable” like “Silence,” the confusion of appearance and reality is no mighty wonder, and the supernatural being and strange animal contribute to the typical fable elements in the tale. Poe, however, carefully manipulated his power of words to move beyond the Gothic and into the symbolic and psychological, even while he employed traditional themes. Supernatural the Demon is for those bent on seeking out only another ghost story, but Poe’s imagination modified this spirit into something of greater substance, nonphysical though it is. Gone is the surface of mere hair-raising, like that in Bulwer’s “Monos and Daimonos,” and, perhaps via Coleridge and De Quincey, a more genuine literature appears. Just so with the lynx; he becomes far more than another specimen of travel-book fauna, although he may initially have been intended for just that if “Silence” was to provide the Folio Club with a tale à la Disraeli-Bulwer-De Quincey, to be misinterpreted by those ever more sodden litterateurs. Maybe the narrator and listeners alike could grow “spirit”-sodden in another fashion in relating to this poetic prose. A lynx recurs in *Marginalia*, but, as I see it, the later context differs from

that in “Silence.” Revision shows the import in the latter; the MS. reads: “And the lynx which dwelleth in the cavern by the tomb, came out from his lair, and lying down at the feet of the Demon looked at him steadily in the face.” Prior to any publication, Poe recast this passage thus: “And the lynx which dwelleth forever in the tomb, came out therefrom, and lay down at the feet of the Demon, and looked at him steadily in the face.” Besides creating more felicitous syntax, the final rendering makes the creature a far less actual species, placing him beyond traditional, sensational Gothicism, instead grounding him in psychological regions, and making him far more suggestive or symbolic. A classical symbol of perfidy, this lynx, when more closely associated with the vague “tomb” rather than a realistic habitat for an actual animal, moves us deftly into the regions of fable from those of wildlife accounts. A dangerous companion, he glances at an equally untrustworthy fellow, and herein is formed yet another mirror image, so to speak. No wonder the narrator is sore perplexed at the end; from such a deadly duo he shies away, although he cannot entirely elude them. Terror of the soul cannot be so easily shaken off as that of Germany.

Several other textual matters are of bibliographical importance, and Stewart’s transcriptions (H.I:380–382) have allowed inaccuracies to continue for nearly three-quarters of a century. First, he dates the *Baltimore Book* printing as 1839. The volume, however, has no date printed in it, and the actual time of appearance was probably late 1837 for the holiday season extending into 1838, which idea is supported by the 1837 date of the first quoted review. Second, he collates inaccurately the *Baltimore Book* with the *BJ* text because both actually read: “And I lay close within my covert and watched the actions of the man” (cf. H.I:381). Stewart also creates an artificial variance between the MS. and *BJ*. Both read (H.I:224, *BJ*.I:12) “Magi—,” the dash not being omitted, as he implies, in the MS. Such botches may appear unimportant, but with Poe’s own attention to minute matters in punctuation and his criticisms of editors who do not abide by an author’s intents, we cannot overlook them.⁹

v

From the evidence presented above, I trust that we may read “Silence” anew. The new stems from the traditional, however, and

what the early reviewers, Harrison, and still other twentieth-century students, discern as seriousness in this tale is the foundation upon which I have built. Poe's earlier tales continued as abiding interests of their creator, not merely because the time span allowed for his greater revisions in them, but because, as the import of much recent scholarship reveals, they arose from ambiguous origins; so he continually reshaped them. What may have been highly comic, in ways yet undetected because many of us cannot locate the staggering numbers of sources available to him, such as no-longer-extant periodical literature, seems to have gained increasing seriousness. Hence, following secondary materials that form a pattern of serious to comic, insofar as interpretations go, my own reading of "Silence" might be deemed new.

NOTES

1. The quotations are respectively from the *Baltimore Monument*, 2 (December 2, 1837), 68–69 [which has, so far as I can determine, not been reprinted elsewhere; so I quote it entire]; *SLM*, 6 (1840), 126; G. R. Thompson, *Poe's Fiction: Romantic Irony in the Gothic Tales* (Madison, Wis., 1973), p. 169, who errs in listing "Silence" among the *SLM* tales, and whose remarks about the parodic and "Gothic" traits may lead readers to see overmuch humor therein; cf. Joseph J. Moldenhauer's cautionary note in his review of Thompson's book, *NCF*, 29 (1974), 215–220; and also that of Donald Daiker, *SSF*, 12 (1975), 41–42. J. Lasley Dameron, moreover, despises weaknesses in Thompson's too-tight bracketing of A. W. Schlegel's critical theories with Poe's practices, a matter to which I also draw attention in Part Two of my study of revisions in "The Assignation." Dameron's review of Thompson is in *MissQ*, 27 (1974), 221–223; my essay is in *LC*, 40 (1976), 221–251.

Debate about the serious versus the comic "Silence" has a long tradition, although, as stated in the text, contemporaneous reviewers stressed its visual and psychological traits—two of Poe's strongest points. James A. Harrison (H.I:134) and Hervey Allen, *Israfel: The Life and Times of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York, 1934), p. 325, see serious implications in the tale, as do two poets, John Gould Fletcher and Edwin Markham, whose views appear in *The Muse Anthology of Poetry* [Edgar Allan Poe Number], 2 (1938), 27, 42–47; and Roy P. Basler, *Sex, Symbolism, and Psychology in Literature* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1948), pp. 177–178. Two more recent critiques that discern satire aimed at Transcendentalism are Clark Griffith, "Poe's 'Ligeia' and the English Romantics," *UTQ*, 21 (1954), 8–25; and Alice Moser Claudel, "What Has Poe's 'Silence' to Say?" *BSUF*, 10 (1969), 66–70—both discredited by Eric W. Carlson in *Poe on the Soul of Man* (Baltimore, 1973), pp. 6, 14–15. Like Griffith,

Robert Regan pays passing respects to "Silence"—along the way to "The Masque of the Red Death"—noting comic qualities in both: *NCF*, 25 (1970), 281. He and Alexander Hammond, the latter in more extensive readings that attempt to place "Silence" in the Folio-Club scheme, realize that Poe's humor defies analysis in simplistic terms. See Hammond's essay in this collection and "A Reconstruction of Poe's 1833 *Tales of the Folio Club*: Preliminary Notes," *PoeS*, 5 (1972), 28, which synthesizes many time-honored studies of the humorous potential in the Folio-Club project. Yet another sensible interpretation is D:130–132. These studies are all too fleeting in attending to "Silence," fine though the brief individual perceptions be.

2. As with interpretive studies, textual work with "Silence" is erratic. The "facsimile" in John W. Robertson's *Bibliography of the Writings of Edgar A. Poe* (San Francisco, 1934), II, facing pp. 114 and 115, does not agree with the actual MS. We are also misinformed in I, p. 224, to the effect that in republishing after the first appearance "Poe omitted the opening paragraph," a reprehensible misstatement, but one heretofore unchallenged. He significantly *revised* the paragraph. The MS. now reposes in the Virginia State Library, and is published here through the courtesy of the Poe Foundation, Inc., Randolph W. Church, and Donald R. Haynes. I also thank Mary Ann Sterner, Anne I. and Jack H. Barton, of Orwigsburg, Pa., and William J. Zimmer, of Narberth, Pa., for assistance in checking the text of the MS. and in providing materials difficult to locate. Duff and M. E. Gilfond, Washington, D.C., also provided me with rare books, and Mrs. Barbara Moyer, Schuylkill Haven, Pa., has helped me beyond the call of duty.
3. I comment on Poe's affinities with Hawthorne's "The Minister's Black Veil," which Poe lauded, and which he could have seen in its original form in *The Token* for 1836, where it bore the subtitle "A Parable." See "A Study on Hawthorne," *ABC*, 24 (1974), 2. Bulwer's "Monos and Daimonos," whence "Silence" partially derives, is subtitled "A Legend." Cf., too, "Humility and Perseverance—A Fable" and "The Two Dreams—A Fable," respectively in *The New-York Mirror*—a favorite quarry of Poe's—for April 24, 1832, and August 11, 1833. David K. Jackson believes that "Memory—An Allegory," in the January 1835 *SLM*, may have inspired "Silence": *Poe and the Southern Literary Messenger* (Richmond, 1934), p. 39. Yet another possibility is "The Bosphorus. A Sketch," *The New Monthly Magazine*, 35 (1832), 212, which precedes Isaac Disraeli's "Of the Three Earliest Authors in Our Vernacular Literature," a possible source for the More-Moore episode in "The Assignation," as I note in my study cited in n. 1. The orientalism in "The Bosphorus" may have attracted Poe.

The Biblical features of "Silence" must not be minimized, considering Poe's familiarity with and use of scripture. See C. Alphonso Smith, "Poe and the Bible," *Biblical World*, 5 (1920), 355; William M. Forrest, *Biblical Allusions in Poe* (New York, 1928), pp. 89–91; and Killis Campbell, "Poe's Knowledge of the Bible," *SP*, 27 (1930), 549.

The query appears in Campbell's edition of *The Complete Short Stories of Edgar Allan Poe*.

Edgar Allan Poe (New York, 1927), p. xxiii. With Poe's debt to Moore's *Byron* well known, his recollection of it while composing "Silence" is probable. If we accept Hammond's theory that behind "The Little Man in Black" of the Folio Club is Poe himself, then we must not forget that behind Poe's early literary career looms the shadow of Tom Moore, as well as that of Byron. Moore's *Byron*, first out in 1830, I cite from *The Works of Lord Byron: with His Letters and Journals, and His Life*, by Thomas Moore, Esq. (London, 1832), III, 328, 303-326, 339. These same pages link Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, by implication, to Venetian scenes and themes. I think, consequently, that they figure more emphatically in backgrounds of "The Assignation" than has hitherto been perceived. It is not straining after parallels to think that Poe drew upon these same passages in Moore for "Silence," when Moore's other works were also coursing in his imagination when he composed "Shadow—A Parable." See Burton R. Pollin, "Light on 'Shadow' and other Pieces by Poe; or, More of Thomas Moore," *ESQ*, 18 (1972), 166-173.

4. The visionary qualities are noticed, but too scantily, by Basler, *supra*. Another analysis of literary uses of silence, which detects interesting blends of sound and vision (again, all too fleetingly), is John Hollander, "The Music of Silence," *Prose*, 7 (1973), 87-89.
5. In a letter to me, dated August 22, 1973, Professor Hammond states that he conceives the Folio-Club text to have involved not so much burlesque or parody in the tales themselves as would have appeared in the critical framework, playful aspects though there be in some of those pieces. He also emphasizes that Poe himself did not apply terms like "burlesque," "parody," or "satires" to the fiction, excepting such tales as "Loss of Breath" and "Lionizing." He is consistent in theorizing about "Silence" in his published essays, cited in n. 1. I also treat Poe's jocularity toward his own brand of writing in "Blackwood Articles à la Poe: How to Make a False Start Pay," *RLV*, 39 (1973), 418-432; and "Poe's 'Usher' Tarred and Fethered," *PoeS*, 6 (1973), 49—stressing that the humor occurs in later works.
6. It is not consistent in *BJ*, probably because of a printer's oversight, although all editors save Griswold capitalize it. Stewart's collation (H.I:381-382) gives a lowercase *d* for the *BJ* text, even though Harrison's own printing capitalizes it!
7. A like use of "demonic spirit" to suggest an essentially evil, threatening being occurs in John Gardner's *The Sunlight Dialogues* (New York, 1973), p. 618. This "demon" proves, finally, to be a madman. Interestingly, he speaks in Biblical phraseology during much of his talking.
8. The opinion of G. R. Thompson: "[the] suspicion that all the Folio Club tales were burlesque, ironic, and critical in intent grows into conviction," may readily be challenged on these grounds. His interpretation of the lynx, for instance, does not concur with many accounts available to Poe, in which the treacherous qualities of that animal are stressed. See "'Silence' and the Folio Club: Who Were the 'Psychological Autobiographists?'," *PN*, 2 (1969), 23. A corrective appears in Stuart and Susan Levine, "History, Myth, Fable, and Satire: Poe's Use of Jacob Bryant," *ESQ*, 21 (1975), 207-211. As they state,

Poe's humor is difficult to pin down. Hammond, in "A Reconstruction," says he only speculates that Poe's university career is a part of the background of "Silence." Considering Richard P. Benton's remark that those who consider Poe a serious writer of Gothic fiction "miss half the meaning and all the fun," and his comparisons of Poe with writers such as Pirandello and Dürrenmatt [ATQ, 24 (1974), 3], I think we should remember the latter's own remarks about parody as applicable to Poe: "He [the literary artist] parodies his materials, contrasts them consciously with what they have actually been turned into." I have been trying to show that "Silence" is not parody of Bulwer or other Romantic writers, or of the Bible, simply because it is cast in their manner. I also think that the evolving texts reveal a move, conscious or otherwise, toward greater somberness, once "Silence" was removed from the Folio-Club framework. Cf. Friedrich Dürrenmatt, *The Marriage of Mr. Mississippi: A Play, and Problems of the Theatre*, trans. Michael Bullock and Gerhard Nellhaus (New York, 1964, 1958), pp. 34-36. I do not see Poe making the contrast to which Dürrenmatt refers as part of parody.

9. A more glaring omission is Stewart's failure to record that in "The Assignation" the hero's action and final speech, the recitation of Henry King's verse (H.I:124; BJ.II:8-12), appeared only in the last version of the tale.

What William Wilson Knew: Poe's Dramatization of an Errant Mind

MARC LESLIE ROVNER

WILLIAM WILSON has a problem: he has glimmers of the past, but he does not understand them. Death is approaching, and in a final attempt to make sense of his life Wilson desires sympathy from his fellow men: "I would wish them to seek out for me, in the details I am about to give, some little oasis of fatality amid a wilderness of error."¹ Unfortunately for Wilson, his life can be summed up with an easy solution. He lived as an allegory, partially good, partially bad, and he killed his good half. The moral dichotomy in Wilson's life easily lends itself toward a simplified solution, and his story has been classified in terms ranging from melodramatic allegory to profound psychological study. In my examination of his life, I want, as William Carlos Williams suggests, "to make a start out of particulars," examining the "particulars" in William Wilson's story, that is, specifically, Poe's revisions. More than *doppelgängers*—although this motif appears several times in Poe's tales—psychological analyses, or metaphysical symbols, I am interested in Poe's evolving texts, and I wish to compare the final version (*BJ*, August 30, 1845) with the original (*Burton's*, October 1839), for a clearer interpretation of Wilson's problems.²

After all, this approach is like Wilson's suggestion on procedure—to examine the details—and Poe's basic theory on the short story. Reviewing Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales*, Poe writes that "in the whole composition, there should be no word written of which the tendency, direct or indirect, is not to the one of the established design," adding: "Truth is often, and in very great degree, the aim of the tale."³ Donald B. Stauffer points out that analysis, the language by which truth is derived, is "the keynote of Wilson's remarks."⁴ He notes Wilson's latinate and abstract terms and words like "perhaps," "conceive," and "solve," which suggest speculative language. He also notices how frequent parenthetical phrases qualify thoughts and how parallel sentence structures weigh ideas. This mode of

speech contrasts markedly with the emotional hyperbole of the opening paragraphs, leaving the reader with a narrator who lacks comprehension but who, nonetheless, provides lucid explanations.

Glossing over his childhood, Wilson begins his story with a reminiscence of his early school life because, in the "minute recollections of the school and its concerns," he finds an emotional respite "in the weakness of a few rambling details." The revisions concerning Wilson's description of the school reflect this passion for details, for Poe deletes excessive adjectives from Wilson's picture to emphasize the character's visual acuity. The "tall houses" are no longer "inordinately tall," the "high wall" around the house is not "enormously high," and the "large chambers" in the school building are not "enormously large." This movement from exaggeration to precision implies that Wilson can recognize the physical limits of his world.⁵ Referring to the schoolhouse, Poe drops the terms "somewhat decayed" and "old," suggesting that Wilson lives in a more ordinary and comprehensible reality than may have been apparent in the original version.

Richard Wilbur writes that Poe's houses reflect a character's state of mind, and, if this statement is true, then we may assume that Wilson has a fairly sharp mind. However, Wilbur writes that dim, winding passages in Poe's stories represent a state of reverie wherein a character loses his sense of location, and he cites, as an example, Wilson's description of the school's interior:⁶

But the house:—how quaint an old building was this:—to me how veritably a palace of enchantment: There was really no end to its windings—to its incomprehensible subdivisions. It was difficult, at any given time, to say with certainty upon which of its two stories one happened to be. From each room to every other there were sure to be found three or four steps either in ascent or descent. Then the lateral branches were innumerable—inconceivable—and so returning in upon themselves, that our most exact ideas in regard to the whole mansion were not very far different from those with which we pondered upon infinity.

Now let me add the concluding sentence of the paragraph: "During the five years of my residence here, I was never able to ascertain with precision, in what remote locality lay the little sleeping apartment assigned to myself and some eighteen or twenty scholars." From Wilson's description the house certainly seems like a mysterious

mansion, and Poe enhances this image by deleting the idea that the dormitory was "cottage-built," making the dorm and the class-rooms one large building. Yet if the house does baffle Wilson, then his apparent ignorance of locations appears inconsistent with Poe's attempts, through revisions, to show that Wilson has a good sense of material qualities. Poe, though, makes one minor but important change in the above passage which eliminates this idea; he changes the word "impossible" to "difficult," implying that Wilson could have known his location in the house.

This knowledge is demonstrated in the story when, deciding to play a practical joke on his rival, Wilson steals through a "wilderness of passages" straight to the latter's bedroom. Wilson has said that he never knew where he and the others slept, yet he is discovered, at night, marching through a labyrinth like a Theseus following a string of understanding that reinforces the impression of the revisions. Thus, in Wilson's character, the reader perceives an ironic contrast between Wilson's familiarity with his physical surroundings and his unawareness of his knowledge.

In keeping with this contrast, Wilson's description of his rival, the other William Wilson, is precise, but, in terms of human insight, he cannot explain the motivations of his other half. In the original version, Wilson notices that they were "not altogether unlike"; this phrase becomes "even singularly alike," which emphasizes their physical similarity. The other William Wilson also recognizes this similarity and discovers a means to annoy Wilson by imitating his dress, walk, and general manner. A more striking parallel is that both William Wilsons have a common birth date, and Poe rearranges the statement of this fact to create an impact on the reader.

These observations indicate Wilson's awareness of a close physical correspondence, although the revisions reveal an initial emotional ambivalence toward his double. Wilson says that the other William Wilson "appeared to be destitute alike of the ambition which urged and the passionate energy of mind which enabled me to excel." Wilson, though, cannot define his feelings toward his rival, saying only that "they formed a motley and heterogeneous admixture," adding: "to the moralist, it will be necessary to say, in addition, that Wilson and myself were the most inseparable companions." In the original, Wilson says that his double "appeared utterly destitute" of

ambition, and that his feelings “were formed of a motley and heterogeneous mixture.” Deleting “utterly” eliminates the possibility that Wilson has formed a definite idea about the ambitions of his rival and the change of tense and the substitution of “admixture” for “mixture” reinforce the impression of Wilson’s confusion. Poe also originally qualifies the term “moralist” with the phrase “fully acquainted with the minute springs of human action,” but he removes it because, although Wilson can describe a relationship as well as he can describe an object, he can define motivation only tenuously. Yet Wilson’s emotions alter after “frequent officious interferences with my will.” He does concede that his double’s “moral sense was far keener than my own; and that I might today, have been a better and thus a happier man, had I less frequently rejected his counsels embodied in those meaning whispers I then but too cordially hated and too bitterly despised.” The original reads: “had I more seldom rejected the counsels” which I “too bitterly derided,” and, in the change, Wilson’s feelings sidestep understanding to become a “positive hatred.”

This animosity is the impetus for the previously mentioned practical joke. Approaching the bed, Wilson holds a lamp to his sleeping counterpart’s face and is shocked:

Were these—*these* the lineaments of William Wilson? . . . Not thus he appeared—assuredly not thus—in the vivacity of his waking hours. The same name: the same contour of person: the same day of arrival at the academy: And then his dogged and meaningless imitation of my gait, my voice, my habits, and my manner: Was it, in truth, within the bounds of human possibility, that *what I now saw* was the result, merely, of the habitual practice of this sarcastic imitation? Awe-stricken, and with a creeping shudder, I extinguished the lamp, passed silently from the chamber, and left, at once, the halls of that old academy, never to enter them again.

He is shocked not by the recognition of their moral relationship but by their extraordinary likeness. Poe substitutes “saw” for “witnessed” to stress Wilson’s visual perception and adds the word “merely” to provide a greater contrast between Wilson’s day and night awareness. He also deletes “a gloomy and tempestuous night of an early autumn”; this change is similar to revision of other

stories in which he muted Gothic or sensational images which may have obscured a desired effect.⁷

Here, the effect is terrifying enough for William Wilson, who flees the academy in a state of mind which contrasts markedly with the way in which he previously described the school. Wilson remembered it as “a dream-like and spirit-soothing place,” yet his experiences there were anything but spirit-soothing. Another odd contrast is that, although the school is supposed to be peaceful, the desks are “so beseamed with initial letters, names at full length, grotesque figures, and other multiplied efforts of the knife, as to have entirely lost what little form might have been their portion in days long departed.” Significantly, Poe drops “meaningless gashes” from this list because in William Wilson’s world and in the story nothing is meaningless, including the other William Wilson’s supposedly “meaningless” imitations.

The irony between Wilson’s memory of the academy and what he actually experienced is consistent with the irony of his ability to recognize physical but not moral relationships. On irony, James Gargano writes that Poe “often designs his tales as to show his narrators’ limited comprehension of their own problems and states of mind.”⁸ He also observes that “William Wilson” has “a tight and coherent form which expresses Poe’s view of the relation between man’s inner, psychological disorganization and his futility in the world at large.”⁹ He bases his opinion on the relationship between Wilson’s wild and futile attempts to flee his rival and the tight and forcefully directed chronological narrative. Gargano’s point derives from certain conceptual observations about the short story, although I contend that, by examining the specific details with which Poe himself was concerned, we can recognize particular ironic relationships within the story.

The major ironic correlation is in Wilson’s inability to associate his physical resemblance with his moral relationship to the other William Wilson, despite his eye for detail. At one point, Wilson does have a visionary glimmer of a close tie: “I cannot better describe the sensation which oppressed me than by saying that I could with difficulty shake off the belief of my having been acquainted with the being who stood before me, at some epoch very long ago—some point of the past even infinitely remote.” This vision indicates

a prenatal world where their spirits may have been one, and Poe rearranges this sentence to stress the possibility that the two Wilsons may have been previously acquainted. Ironically, the physical world—the world of clothes, speech, and detail—divides the whole person of William Wilson into good and bad halves, with the sharp-eyed bad half being blind to his bond with the good half. It is not within the nature of William Wilson to dwell on metaphysics, and so he dismisses his vision saying: “I mention it at all but to define the day of the last conversation I there held with my singular namesake.”

After this conversation, Wilson makes his night visit and then flees the academy. The pace of the story quickens because, after having established the relationship in the long school section, Poe is free to trace the rapid, progressive moral decline of William Wilson, a decline that is constantly checked by his other half. At Eton, Wilson is prevented from making “a toast of more than wonted profanity” when he is summoned to meet “a youth about my own height, and habited in a white kerseymere morning frock coat, cut in the novel fashion of the one I myself wore at the moment.” In the original story, Wilson was about to utter “an intolerable profanity”; Poe changes the adjective to tone down a sensational image that might overshadow a desired effect. Then, after Wilson has unknowingly ruined a young lord by cheating at cards in Oxford, a stranger enters the room and announces that a pack of shaved cards is in Wilson’s morning coat. He leaves the room, and an uproar ensues when the cards are found in Wilson’s pocket. As Wilson departs the room in disgrace, he is handed a cloak, the duplicate of his own. He realizes that, besides himself, only the stranger has worn a cloak, but, “retaining some presence of mind,” he accepts the second cloak, and places it over his own. Without comment a connection is made based on the cloak, and this time Wilson flees a school not from fear but from shame.

In Paris, Vienna, Berlin, and Moscow, his criminal intentions are always thwarted by his rival. Then, in Rome, they meet at a masquerade, a rather ironic setting for a dropping of disguises and also a common motif in Poe’s tales, most notably “The Masque of the Red Death.” Prior to arranging an assignation with the beautiful, young wife of an aging duke, Wilson suddenly feels a hand on his shoulder and hears that “ever-remembered, low damnable *whisper*.”

"In an absolute phrenzy of wrath, I turned at once upon him who had thus interrupted me, and seized him violently by the collar. He was attired, as I had expected, in a costume altogether similar to my own; wearing a Spanish cloak of blue velvet, begirt about the waist with a crimson belt sustaining a rapier. A mask of black silk entirely covered his face." Wilson and the interloper fight in a small ante-chamber, and, with "sheer strength," Wilson presses his foe against a wall and kills him. Then he hurries to the door, secures it, and is shocked as he turns around:

A large mirror,—so at first it seemed to me in my confusion—now stood where none had been perceptible before; and, as I stepped up to it in extremity of terror, mine own image, but with features all pale and dabbled in blood, advanced to meet me with a feeble tottering gait.

Thus it appeared, I say, but was not. It was my antagonist—it was Wilson, who then stood before me in the agonies of his dissolution. His mask and cloak lay, where he had thrown them, upon the floor. Not a thread in all his raiment—not a line in all the marked and singular lineaments of his face which was not, even in the most absolute identity, *mine own!*

It was Wilson; but he spoke no longer in a whisper, and I could have fancied that I myself was speaking while he said: "*You have conquered, and I yield. Yet, henceforward art thou also dead—dead to the World, to Heaven and to Hope! In me didst thou exist—and, in my death, see by this image, which is thine own, how utterly thou hast murdered thyself!*"

In the first paragraph, Wilson's hatred is stressed, as "an absolute phrenzy of wrath" replaces "a perfect whirlwind," the latter term a sensational image that does little to characterize Wilson's reaction. The other William Wilson's last words are meant to convert that blindness into enlightenment as Wilson is commanded to "see by this image" what they were together and what he has done to separate permanently the halves. "See" echoes Poe's earlier change of "witnessed" for "saw," reinforcing the idea that Wilson has not adequately employed his perceptions. The reader's perceptions also receive a strong hint to "see" as Poe illuminates several other earlier mentioned elements in the ending.

The most significant revisions are the additions to the final paragraphs, particularly in the references to clothes—an important detail in the story. To Wilson's observations about the Spanish cloak, Poe

adds that it was “blue velvet, begirt about the waist with a crimson belt sustaining a rapier.” The line about the mask was originally a clause; in the revision it becomes a separate sentence underscoring the disguising of Wilson’s antagonist’s features. These modifications create a vivid impression of their mutual disguises and arm both characters. Adding “not a thread in all his raiment” impresses upon Wilson their mutual identity more strongly than any other mention of clothes.

Through Wilson’s recognition of their indistinguishable costume and appearance, he finally sees that he and the other William Wilson are the same person. This startling realization occurred on his night visit, but it was a discovery that he blotted out of his mind. In this final scene, his double will not let him forget this fact again. The recognition comes through the emphasis on clothes, and, in fact, the relationship between clothes and moral correspondences is a thread woven through the story, for whenever he met another character, Wilson tended to evaluate the person in terms of his garments.

Bransby, the master of the academy, is “a gigantic paradox, too monstrous for solution” to Wilson, who cannot reconcile the benign minister with “his robes so glossy and so clerically flowing” with the strict disciplinarian “who, of late, with sour visage, and in snuffy habiliments, administered, ferule in hand, the Draconian laws of the academy.” Then at Eton, Wilson notices that his startling visitor is wearing the same clothes as himself, and, at Oxford, a long section explains how the departing stranger left behind an expensive fur, the exact duplicate of Wilson’s coat. It is a tremendous coincidence that Wilson’s moral intruders dress as he does, yet, while noting this fact, he shows no awareness whatsoever of its possible significance. It is interesting that, as Wilson recognizes the duplicate garb in the Eton scene, Poe removes Wilson’s remark “what then struck my mad fancy” to create an emotional reaction consistent with the other incidents.

Not until the final scene of the story, when Wilson is commanded to “see by this image,” does he make the necessary associations. Because he tells the story in retrospect, his moral sense seems more pronounced at the end of his life than at any time prior to the symbolic murder;¹⁰ although Wilson evidently anguishes over his fate, I question whether he really understands his situation. In the second

paragraph of the story, clothes are made a metaphor for morals when Wilson says “for me, in an instant, all virtue dropped bodily as a mantle,” yet morals do not imply guilt for, in later versions, out goes the next remark: “I shrouded my nakedness in triple guilt.” Although this line may have been changed so as not to overuse the metaphor, it is more important to note that Poe eliminates Wilson’s only mention of the word “guilt.” Attempting to show that Wilson does feel guilty, Thomas Walsh likens the dying man’s last words: “dead to the World, to Heaven and to Hope,” to the opening: “Oh, outcasts of all outcasts most abandoned!—to the earth art thou not forever dead? to its honors, to its golden aspirations?—and a cloud, dense, dismal, and limitless, does it not hang eternally between thy hopes and heaven?”¹¹ In his opening words, Wilson appropriates his other half’s dying lines, but, in the context of his emotional rhetoric, they are uttered as words without meaning. The last line originally read “dead to the world and its hopes”; Poe capitalizes these images, emphasizing their abstract importance, and adds the reference “to Heaven.” Thus, he converts the last line into a statement of moral truth that has apparently had little effect on Wilson. The world, hope, and heaven are still lowercase terms for him, although to his now-dead half they possessed capital importance. The surviving Wilson is tormented by his deeds; he expresses not a feeling of guilt but a desire for sympathy. He realizes that he has lost the favor of the world and heaven, but he does not understand the full implications thereof.

Poe has provided specific hints to explain this loss, and his revisions clarify the ironic relationship between Wilson’s eye for detail and his inability to associate detail with his life’s moral framework, in effect making more explicit the string of clues leading to the substantiation of Wilson’s moral obtuseness. The sensitive reader should recognize the well-laid trail of “evidence.” The morally blind Wilson lived not in a Gothic miasma, but in a world composed of intelligible particulars, and it is interesting to note that Poe’s technique for explicating Wilson’s problem looks forward to his invention of the detective story and his later ratiocinative tales. Brander Matthews observes: “it is not in the mystery itself that the author seeks to interest the reader, but rather in the successive steps whereby his analytical observer is enabled to solve a problem that well might be dismissed as

beyond human elucidation.”¹² These successive steps, beyond the elucidation of William Wilson, serve as Poe’s challenge to the reader.

NOTES

1. Edgar Allan Poe, “William Wilson,” H.III:300. All quotations from the text are based on this source.
2. “William Wilson” was also published in *The Gift* for 1840 and in *TGA*; however, besides accidental changes, the story was not extensively revised until the *BJ* version. I have used and have checked R. A. Stewart’s collations which appear in H, and, in doing so, I have received much valuable aid and counsel from Professor Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV.
3. Edgar Allan Poe, “Twice-Told Tales,” H.X:108–109.
4. “Style and Meaning in ‘Ligeia’ and ‘William Wilson’,” *SSF*, 2 (1965), 325.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 324.
6. Richard Wilbur, “The House of Poe,” R:110.
7. Other articles containing this observation in regard to Poe’s revisions are: Seymour Gross, “Poe’s Revisions in ‘The Oval Portrait’,” *MLN*, 79 (1959), 19; David Sloane and Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV, “Poe’s Revisions in ‘Berenice’,” *ATQ*, 24 (1974), 20; G. R. Thompson, “‘Proper Evidences of Madness’: American Gothic and the Interpretation of ‘Ligeia’,” *ESQ*, 18 (1972), 36.
8. “The Question of Poe’s Narrators,” *CE*, 25 (1963), 165.
9. “Art and Irony in ‘William Wilson’,” in *New Approaches to Poe: A Symposium*, ed. Richard P. Benton (Hartford, 1970), p. 18.
10. Thomas F. Walsh, “The Other William Wilson,” *ATQ*, 10 (1971), 17.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 18.
12. “Poe and the Detective Story,” *Critics on Poe*, ed. David Kesterson (Coral Gables, Fla., 1973), p. 63.

A Telling Tale: Poe's Revisions in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue"

JOEL KENNETH ASARCH

THE composition of "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" was a long and painstaking labor for Edgar Allan Poe. He assiduously revised each successive text, producing a final tale more credible, though more grotesque, than the earlier versions. I intend to show how the revisions of "Murders" affect overt meaning, structure, and underlying implications of the tale.

Four variant texts exist from Poe's lifetime: one manuscript in his handwriting, and three printings: *Graham's* (April 1841), *The Prose Romances* (1843), and, finally, the *Tales* (1845). The first version exemplifies his constant attention toward betterment.¹ In the margins, he adds lengthy new sections, such as the testimony of Albert Montani, deletes others, revises punctuation and grammar, and amends terminology. For instance, Poe initially entitled the tale "The Murders in the Rue Trianon-Bas." He often crossed out "Trianon" and inserted "Morgue," but not until the *Graham's* publication did these inconsistencies change entirely to "Morgue." This printing adheres closely, although not completely, to the manuscript. However, to aid the reader further, Poe corrected the punctuation and included approximately twenty-five additional commas. In a change designed to aid credibility, he narrowed the distance between the house and the shutter to a gap which could be jumped by an agile human being. Still the text displeased the author.

In 1843, Poe's finances were at an ebb (rather like Dupin's), and, attempting to procure funds, he contracted with Graham to publish his works in pamphlets costing only 12½ cents apiece. If the first volume, consisting of "Murders" and "The Man that was Used Up," were successful, an entire series of *Prose Romances* would come out. Again Poe modified the tale. Punctuation differs markedly from the earlier versions; semicolons replace dashes, and commas strengthen the grammar. Although the text noticeably improved, the financial venture failed; yet, in 1845 Poe once more modified "Murders," for the final time,² in his *Tales*. Trying to tighten the structure, he elimi-

nated the previous opening paragraph and all redundancies (approximately 359 words). Most editors include in their printings of Poe's works this last published version which he painstakingly reworked in his effort to create a "perfect" text.

The corrections and revisions are primarily what a meticulous editor would attempt. Poe, an editor himself, knew what to look for in a text. He "concerned himself as a critic of his own writing with even the slightest detail of form: matters of spelling; punctuation and grammar. . . . A difference can be accepted as the result of Poe's editing."³ The textual variations appear to have been carefully considered, and not haphazardly included by someone indifferent to meaning and structure.

Although many of the corrections do little to vary these two characteristics, many do alter the reader's interpretation or understanding of the story, and Poe wrote always with the reader in mind. The most common variants are in punctuation, properly placing every point. "The writer who neglects punctuation, or mis-punctuates, is liable to be misunderstood—this, according to the popular idea, is the sum of the evils arising from heedlessness or ignorance."⁴ Beginning with the sparsely punctuated manuscript (those marks it does contain are further emphasized by the general dearth), each edition is more fully punctuated than the last. To aid the reader in separating and comprehending the complex sentence structure, Poe employed extensive commas in the 1843 and 1845 editions. "For the want of merely a comma, it often occurs that an axiom appears a paradox, or that a sarcasm is converted into a sermonoid."⁵ Modifying phrases ("The windows[], both of the back and front rooms []," [page 162, line 20]) and clauses ("If I am in error[], he will merely suppose . . ." [184,20f.]) are separated by punctuation from the rest of the sentence. In 1843 and 1845, transitional phrases are separated from dependent clauses, making these remarks appear almost as asides inserted to clarify the text. ("Attempt[], now[], to place . . ." [182,2f.] or "and[], above all[], I . . ." [150,33]).

Words that Poe wished to stress are italicized. As he changed the meaning of the text, these words were changed. In the *Prose Romances* and *Tales*, versions intended for the average American, scientific words (*nebula*, *retina*) that were possibly unknown to the common reader were differentiated from the text by italics.

Poe frequently substituted words within the text. One result of substitution is the clarification of muddled points. “[H]e asked me my opinion respecting [it]>the murders” (165,23f.). Originally, this sentence might have meant that Dupin asked the narrator his opinion out of respect for the opinion, or the “it” might have referred to the imprisonment of Le Bon. By substituting “the murders,” all doubts about meaning disappear. Poe recognized that redundant or superfluous constructions added only bulk, not meaning. For example: “[I do not propose to follow the man in the circumstantial narrative which he now detailed.] What he stated was, in substance, this . . .” (188,4). The first sentence is summed up by the words, “in substance,” and Poe only repeats himself by employing both. By eliminating a sentence containing too obvious a clue, such as, “Here again we have evidence of that vastness of strength upon which I would fix your attention” (180,16), Poe places a larger burden of recognizing clues upon the reader. An exactness is also practiced in many revisions. In manuscript, “found” becomes “caught” (183,29) when referring to the wild ape. Also, once the “beast” (188,21) gains control of the razor, Poe can no longer refer to the animal as the soldier’s “prisoner.” In the later editions, a greater value is accorded precision and emphasis, thus allowing Poe’s points to emerge clearly.

With no unnecessary verbiage, the story becomes more flowing and unified. In a detective or horror story, the resolution of plot is most important; the narrator’s discoursing on the faculties of the brain is not. “Murders” is a tale of ratiocination, not an exposé, and the quicker the reader reaches a solution, the happier he will be. By eliminating the opening paragraph, Poe goes directly to proving the existence of, rather than discussing, such an organ of analysis. Furthermore, by removing the opening paragraph, a passive didactic beginning is transformed into an active, more energetic and forceful opening. Some of the emendations of the 1845 edition result from the deletion of the opening paragraph. For instance, the “faculty in question” had to be renamed the “faculty of re-solution” (146,16). Poe had to become more specific once he eliminated the paragraph on phrenology.

Most interesting are changes which affect the atmosphere and meaning. “Murders” is, after all, a grotesque work, the unnatural pervading the tale. Through his emendations, Poe made the story

more macabre. Originally, the season was the autumn and winter of 18—, but in the manuscript, the text was corrected to read, “during the spring and part of the summer of 18—” (150,10f.). A contrast is thereby created between the bright green spring time and the dark night walks, the “time-eaten and grotesque mansion,” and the cold butchery of the Rue Morgue.⁶ The change of names, from Trianon to Morgue, has “the primary effect of a macabre figure of speech and profoundly deepens the emotional suggestiveness of the original title with the chill of horrible anticipation.”⁷ In the 1843 and 1845 publications, “bizarre” is italicized to make it stand out from the text—an effort to make the situation more foreboding. There is a dehumanization of the villain, the orangutan. Referred to initially as “he,” the ape becomes depersonalized—an almost “unnatural” creature, less human and more repulsive and dangerous. A vicious brute now holds the razor, not a “he.” For additional shock value and greater drama, Poe further emphasizes the horror of the scene by eliminating a modifying clause: “[U]pon an attempt to raise her, the head fell off[, and rolled to some distance]” (158,9f.). Without further explanation, the reader must confront the shock of visualizing the severed head. In the *Tales*, a further movement toward the grotesque occurs: “I felt a creeping of the flesh” (181,6) replaces “I shuddered.” Within the former expression occur sinister connotations and feelings of horror and sensuality. In this manner, Poe consciously attempted to create a tale more grotesque, and less everyday.

Poe also attempted in many ways to make the text more credible to the reader, despite the weirdness just mentioned. In 1845 all paragraphs of the newspaper account begin with quotation marks. These pointings remind us that the narrator himself is obtaining his information from the newspaper, and not from first-hand experience. Poe later realized the improbability of Dupin’s being able to open the window without first releasing the catch. “Pressing the spring,[.] I gently raised the sash” (125,29). The author adopts, whenever possible, realistic terminology and descriptions. For instance, the length of the broken nail embedded in the window frame increases from an eighth to a quarter of an inch. Perhaps in reaction to *Graham’s* criticism, Poe realized that an eighth-inch nail would never have withstood the ape’s slamming of the window upon his retreat. The number of hairs removed from Madame Espanaye’s head also changes;

pulling out a million hairs might be too far-fetched, so the number is cut in half. The distance between the house and the shutter narrows in the 1841 text, “to within [four] two feet [and a half] of the lightning-rod” (177,1f.). Finally, Poe alters the orangutan’s coloration from yellow to tawny, the actual shade of the beast’s fur, thus providing for the audience greater realism.

Tenses in “Murders” constantly change. What originally was a story far removed from the reader because of the past tense becomes temporally closer through present tense. “Then we sallied forth . . . seeking . . . that infinity of mental excitement which quiet observation [could]>[would]>can afford” (152,1f.). This action is now open, not only to the characters, but for bringing the reader into the story. Even Dupin’s soliloquy is cast into the present tense in 1843. “[T]he deductions [were]>are the *sole* proper ones” (172,10). By changing tenses, Poe becomes less literary, less preaching, and more storytelling. The phrase “if method there [be]>is” (153,28) is remarkably similar, in its original form, to Polonius’ “Though this be madness. . . .”

No word was safe from Poe’s improving tendencies. If he saw improvement in changing word ordering or by substituting a word, he emended the text and thus attempted to make it more logical and realistic. For instance, in “from the time elapsing from the [screams]> ingress of the beast and the [ingress of the beast]>screams” (190, 1of.), the progression of the events is more logical. It is highly unlikely that if one screams out in the middle of the night, an ape will enter the room. Upon seeing such a creature, however, one is very likely to cry out.

In the later editions, Poe distinguished more sharply between Dupin, the essence of ratiocination, and the narrator, the recipient of Dupin’s analysis. Lines from Sir Thomas Browne’s *Urn-Burial* are placed directly below the title as an epigraph for the tale: “What song the Syrens sang, or what name Achilles assumed when he hid among women, although puzzling questions, are not beyond all conjecture” (146). Implying that certain individuals far surpass others in analytical ability, the epigraph, inserted in the *Prose Romances*, sets the tone for Dupin’s “guesses.” The answers to apparently unsolvable mysteries may be found by means of the imagination, a synonym for conjecture as advanced by Dupin. More than human, but less than

godlike, Dupin is contrasted to both narrator and reader. "The Dupin kind of mentality assumes a godlike omniscience; the narrator 'I' and the reader, the role of dull-witted dupes."⁸ During the exercise of his ratiocinative powers, Dupin is purposely isolated from the narrator: "It was his humor, now, to decline all conversation on the subject of the murder, until [after we had taken a bottle of wine together] about noon the next day" (168,10ff.). A chasm exists between the "creeping flesh" of the narrator and the cold rationale of Dupin. Yet, even the master detective is not immune to Poe's re-fashioning hand. In later editions he appears more forceful. For example, when surveying the scene of the crime, Dupin exclaims, "But [we will not revert to]>dismiss the idle opinion of this print" (168,21f.). What do newspapers matter when compared with this man's analytical mind? His powers of analysis and perception are paraded when he alone, not the police nor the narrator, realizes that the nail securing the window, whose "fissure was invisible" (175, 28), must be defective. Dupin's genius intensifies his imaginative stature in the reader's eye.

Finally, the evolving texts place additional burdens upon our faculties. As Poe wrote to Cooke: "In the 'Murders in the Rue Morgue,' for instance, where is the ingenuity of unravelling a web which you yourself (the author) have woven for the express purpose of unravelling? The reader is made to confound the ingenuity of the supposititious Dupin with that of the writer of the story."⁹ Poe actively attempts to hoax the reader into picking up false clues,¹⁰ or into using his own imagination. By deleting certain sentences and fragments, he allows the reader to think for himself: "[t]he fugitive's attention was arrested by a light [(the only one apparent except those of the town-lamps)] gleaming from the open window . . ." (189, 10f.). Removing this phrase leaves doubt in the reader's mind. Why did the orangutan choose this window? Were there lights elsewhere? The reader must interpret. When the enclosed phrase is withdrawn, in, "all the sources [(whatever be their character)] whence legitimate advantage may be derived" (148, 14f.), the reader must decide if this means only those sources of legitimate or of illegitimate character—a crucial decision because Poe later has Dupin withhold evidence, the tawny hair.

By isolating an article between dashes, Poe prods us into believing

that this is a clue. “A heavy club of wood, or a broad bar of iron[,]—a chair[,]—any large, heavy, and obtuse weapon . . .” (164, 25ff.). The reader is tricked into believing that a chair will be important in solving the mystery. At certain points in the 1845 edition, commas become so numerous as to task our concentration by having so many interruptions: “As soon as they forced an entrance, they reclosed the door[], to keep out the crowd, which collected very fast, notwithstanding the lateness of the hour” (160, 21ff.). The additional comma, inserted in the *Prose Romances* and *Tales*, roughens the rhythm of the sentence, forcing the reader, in order to comprehend its meaning, to make active mental associations. He must consciously observe, and not have everything pointed out to him. “Yet there *was* something to be observed” (170,30f.). The powers of the intellect should be “tasked,”¹¹ made to work actively, rather than “taxed,” or depleted.

Although most of the variations of “Murders” can be explained, many questions remain unanswered: why did “Good God” become, in 1845, “Dupin” (181,20)? Was this because during the course of revision Poe began to equate his hero with a detective-God? Why did “for God’s sake” become “for Heaven’s sake” (153,27)? Perhaps Poe’s own Victorian sense of delicacy compelled him to remove from the *Tales* the name of God,¹² or perhaps this was the idea of an editor of Wiley and Putnam, Poe’s publishers. Why did Poe shift from a British method of spelling in the manuscript and *Prose Romances* to an American mode in 1841 and 1845? These questions and others remain for investigation.

The revisions of “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” do bear directly upon the interpretation of the tale. In each change Poe had a specific purpose, whether it was to correct grammar or further to hoax the reader. An overall result was to change the emphasis from a theoretical study of analysis to a practical demonstration of the imagination. Each new feature in “Murders” brought it closer to Poe’s ideal of the “perfect” text.

NOTES

1. A comparison of the manuscript, in the Rare Book Department of the Free Library of Philadelphia, with “*The Murders in the Rue Morgue*”: *Facsimile of the Manuscript in the Drexel Institute* (Philadelphia: George Barrie and Son, [1895]) reveals several significant errors in the latter. All references unless specifically noted are to Harrison. My form for indicating the differences between Harrison and others is: []>Harrison (Harrison, page, line).
2. In the Lorimer Graham copy of *Tales*, Poe again emended the text slightly. The *Tales* (New York, 1845) version is placed first and the Lorimer Graham second. (1) Upon>On (124,36). This now conforms to Poe’s two previous prepositional constructions. (2) Lower>upper (139,13). By altering the position of the latticework, Poe makes climbing into the window less difficult, thereby casting suspicion of the deed upon a human being. (3) Convey>suggest (140, 23f.). The burden of finding the clue is placed upon the reader. I thank the Humanities Research Center, of the University of Texas at Austin, for giving me permission to quote from the Lorimer Graham text.
3. Ernest Boll, “The Manuscript of *The Murders in the Rue Morgue*, and Poe’s Revisions,” *MP*, 40 (May 1943), 303.
4. H.xvi:130.
5. Op. cit.
6. Benjamin Franklin Fisher iv, “Blackwood Articles à la Poe: How to Make a False Start Pay,” *RLV*, 39 (1973), 424ff. Professor Fisher also sees Poe consciously attempting to create a grotesque and Gothic environment.
7. Boll, p. 306.
8. G. R. Thompson, *Poe’s Fiction: Romantic Irony in Gothic Tales* (Madison, Wis., 1973), p. 174.
9. Poe’s letter to Philip Cooke, August 9, 1846, in L.II:328.
10. Fisher, pp. 426ff. Professor Fisher views “Murders” as a combination of Gothic tradition and Poe’s love of hoaxing.
11. [“tax”]>“task” (147,9).
12. In “Poe’s Revisions of ‘The Mystery of Marie Rogêt’—a Hoax?” (in this volume), Richard Fusco suggests a transformation of the literary personality of Poe between 1842 and 1845.

Poe's Revisions of “The Mystery of Marie Rogêt”—a Hoax?

RICHARD FUSCO

I

THE textual changes in the two versions of “The Mystery of Marie Rogêt” reveal Poe’s craftsmanship, suggest his differing literary personalities, and provide keys to his theories of reasoning—categories which often overlap. The manipulations of prose in “Marie Rogêt” provide insight into Poe’s development of the detective-story format from “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” to the archetypical “Purloined Letter.” His revisions always aimed at improvement, and in “Marie Rogêt” these changes were a consequence of Poe’s perception of his public literary reputation. Between the original text, in *Snowden’s Lady’s Companion* of 1842–43, and the reappearance in the *Tales* of 1845, his admiration for the ratiocination theme altered, and “Marie Rogêt” reflected this changed attitude.¹

The first main textual difference is a footnote included in the 1845 version:

Upon the original publication of “Marie Rogêt,” the foot-notes now appended were considered unnecessary; but the lapse of several years since the tragedy upon which this tale is based, renders it expedient to give them, and also to say a few words in explanation of the general design. A young girl, *Mary Cecilia Rogers*, was murdered in the vicinity of New York; and, although her death occasioned an intense and long-enduring excitement, the mystery attending it had remained unsolved at the period when the present paper was written and published (November, 1842). Herein, under the pretense of relating the fate of a Parisian *grisette*, the author has followed, in minute detail, the essential, while merely paralleling the inessential facts of the real murder of Mary Rogers. Thus all argument founded upon the fiction is applicable to the truth; and the investigation of the truth was the object.

The “Mystery of Marie Rogêt” was composed at a distance from the scene of the atrocity, and with no other means of investigation than the newspapers afforded. Thus much escaped the writer of which he could have availed himself and had he been on the spot, and visited the localities.

It may not be improper to record, nevertheless, that the confessions of two persons (one of them the Madame Deluc of the narrative) made, at different periods, long subsequent to the publication, confirmed, in full, not only the general conclusion, but absolutely *all* the chief hypothetical details by which that conclusion was attained.²

Evidence exists to make suspect these claims. Poe reported that he wrote the story by November 1842—which is true—and that the story was published in that month—which is misleading. One-third of “Marie Rogêt” was indeed printed by November, but two more installments appeared in the December 1842 and February 1843 issues. The significance of this serialization is related to more inconsistencies in the quoted passage. Stating that the confession of the real Madame Deluc (Mrs. Federica Loss) supports his solution of the mystery is Poe’s fabrication. The public rumors about Mrs. Loss’s dying confession linked Mary Rogers’ death to a complicated series of events in which abortion was a key factor. Her testimony occurred not at a “period, long subsequent to” but *between* publication of the second and third installments of “Marie Rogêt.”³ The passage announcing success and the subsequent footnotes boisterously providing actual counterparts to newspaper accounts and people involved in the tragedy were red herrings for an unsuspecting reader. Previous researchers believe that the second version was a hoax, a deliberate attempt to hoodwink Poe’s audience.⁴ That is, he took advantage of the average reader’s naïveté to promote his own reputation of superior intellect and, by implication, great literary powers. If this assessment is sound, his philosophy in 1845 could have run: “Every falsehood another man believes diminishes him and makes me his better by default.” The 1845 edition roughly coincided with the appearance of “‘Thou Art the Man!’”—Poe’s burlesque and repudiation of the genre that he himself had created. He expounded his disenchantment in a letter to Philip Pendleton Cooke: “These tales of ratiocination owe most of their popularity to being something in a new key. I do not mean to say that they are not ingenious—but the people think them more ingenious than they are—on account of their method and *air* of method. In the ‘Murders in the Rue Morgue’, [sic] for instance, where is the ingenuity of unravelling a web which you yourself (the author) have woven for the expressed purpose of unravelling? The reader is made to confound the ingenuity of Dupin with

that of the writer of the story.”⁵ Apparently, “‘Thou Art the Man!’” indicated Poe’s contempt for detective stories and, therefore, “Marie Rogêt” might have been altered through the explanatory footnotes into a private joke that reinforces such scorn.

I find quite the reverse from analyzing the two texts. Despite the implications in the opening note, Poe toned down his earlier arrogance in the 1845 version,⁶ as is evident in these phrases from the first version that were deleted in *Tales*:

That an individual assassin was convicted upon his own confession of the murder of Marie Rogêt. . . . (*Tales*, deleted on p. 197, l. 38, previous to “the.”)⁷

Such thoughts as those we may imagine to have passed through the mind of Marie, but the point is one upon which I consider it necessary now to insist. I have reasoned thus, merely to call attention, as I said a minute ago, to the culpable remissness of the police. (Deleted on p. 183, after l. 33.)

Statement one was derived from Poe’s erroneous identification of the murderer. In contrast to the tone of the introductory footnote, he eliminated this conjecture from the final version. The second omission reduced, in part, his virulence toward the police handling of the case, because he proved to be just as mistaken as they. In 1845, he used generalized statements that would not in themselves emphasize abortion, but that contain possibilities for it:

But in consenting so to accompany this individual; she. . . . (1842)

But in consenting so to accompany this individual, (*for whatever purpose—to her mother known or unknown,*) she. . . . (1845, p. 182)

* * *

“We may imagine her thinking thus—I am to meet a certain person for the purposes of elopement.” (1842)

“We may imagine her thinking thus—I am to meet a certain person for the purposes of elopement, or for certain other purposes known only to myself.” (1845, p. 183)

* * *

But, as it is my design *never* to return—or not for some weeks, the. . . . (1842)

But, as it is my design *never* to return—or not for some weeks—or not until certain concealments are effected—the. . . . (1845, p. 183)

We can see authorial change in attitude between the two versions.⁸

From 1842 to 1845, spelling and style were refined toward more conventional English. "Parfumerie" became "perfumery"; "segar" became "cigar"; "visitor," "visiter." A second improvement was condensed phrasing. Dupin's "moody and fantastic reverie" became "moody reverie" (p. 152). "The strong and just suspicion" about Marie's possessions that were left in the thicket—the most probable location of the crime—became merely "the suspicion" (p. 190). Still not satisfied with the text of "Marie Rogêt," Poe altered in his copy of *Tales* "wild train of circumstances" to just "train of circumstances."⁹ Finally, he joined words and improved punctuation wherever possible.¹⁰ "Any thing" became "anything"; "no body," "nobody"; "for ever," "forever." To see, or pronounce, these words separately requires more effort, which gives them special emphasis; this emphasis was diluted deliberately in 1845.

Perceptible, too, in some of these revisions is a Poe of dual literary personality.¹¹ In 1842 he was interested in applying a theory of detection to the real world, but by 1845 he no longer cared about that theory.¹² The evidence above supports such doubleness. The unusual spellings and the volatile phrases suggest that Poe was more intent upon and so observed the bizarre side of events in 1842 as compared with 1845. The emphasis in the split words suggests that he was talking down to his audience, a plausible assumption because in 1842 he intended to prove that the police, the newspapers, and the public were wrong about the Mary Rogers murder. What changed him during these three years from the egotistical, part-time detective-story writer into someone different—and what was this difference?

Three incidents probably effected the transformation. First, the accepted explanation of the Mary Rogers murder was drastically altered. Poe apparently made frantic, last-minute revisions in the final installment of "Marie Rogêt" after Mrs. Loss's confession.¹³ Second, he offered a "solution" to the mystery in Dickens' *Barnaby Rudge* after a perusal of the first installment. He was ultimately discredited on all accounts except one trivial point.¹⁴ Third, during this period, he was earning a reputation in decoding cryptograms, but in that pursuit, as in the other matters, difficulties arose.¹⁵ Poe must have experienced some sort of artist's vainglory when "Marie Rogêt" was first published, his theories on *Barnaby Rudge* stood unchallenged,

and his cryptogram solutions were stirring public interest. He might have believed that he could discern truth by imagination and reasoning.¹⁶ The downfall of these three projects may have shaken his confidence. Because of yet another previous difficulty—the poor sales of *Arthur Gordon Pym*—he had returned to writing short stories and had begun to criticize the novel as a form. This literary defense mechanism reappeared in his development of detective fiction when he retreated from reality and reverted to a more purely abstract approach. Such methodology led toward both “‘Thou Art the Man!’” and “‘The Purloined Letter.’” In its revisions, “‘Marie Rogêt’” reinforces the impression of ceaseless change in Poe’s fiction. The shift in emphasis from the primary motivation in “‘Marie Rogêt’” through parody in “‘Thou Art the Man!’” and on to a variation of the ratiocination theme in “‘The Purloined Letter’” liberated their creator’s experimental proclivities.

II

“‘The Mystery of Marie Rogêt’” represented Poe’s fling with the tangible in its basis on a true incident. Failures in the three circumstances mentioned above might have persuaded him not to apply his reasoning power ever again to genuine occurrences. Both “‘The Murders in the Rue Morgue’” and “‘Marie Rogêt’” were structured upon causal conclusions—a series of interrelated propositions re-creating an event that had been shrouded in mystery. Poe’s failure to solve the Mary Rogers case no doubt caused him to mistrust this method and, perhaps, such an attitude prompted the parody in “‘Thou Art the Man!’”, in which the crime was solved by the wildest train of causal reasonings. This method of ratiocination gave way entirely to deduction in “‘The Purloined Letter’”: a conclusion was sought by first looking for what could not, literally, be true.¹⁷ Unlike the previous Dupin stories, this one was not based on newspaper sources. The problem and circumstances were of Poe’s own imagining, and the conclusions resulted from his own plot contrivance. I do not mean that he tried to dissociate the story from reality. He followed the Lockean concept that all invention is based upon experience, believing that ingenuity was based on the ability to organize concepts and experiences rather than upon the ability to create new ones.¹⁸ He was doubtless more interested in his chain of

reasoning than in developing the power to discern truth in reality—in other words, the method mattered more to him than the result. The consideration of this method is essential to the understanding of the textual variations in “Marie Rogêt.”

In 1842, Poe wanted to indicate how the murder was committed and who committed it. In 1845, he emphasized instead the mental processes of his detective and deleted several conclusions. The importance of the opening footnote now comes into focus. No reader would credit the subtleties of reasoning in “Marie Rogêt” if he knew that Poe had been wrong about the facts. Curiosity would be aroused, though, by a “miracle of literature” that had proven to be true. If, in a footnote, the writer argued accomplishment of this feat, what ordinary reader in 1845 would have disbelieved him? In short, Poe sought the “unity of effect” he had lauded as a necessity in the short story.

A greater appreciation for mathematics in the second version of “Marie Rogêt” places Poe firmly within reality. Remember that the Minister D—— was praised by Dupin for being both poet and mathematician.¹⁹ Poe’s poetic power is observable in his prose works and needs no elaboration here. Changes in “Marie Rogêt” do suggest his growing understanding of mathematics—most notably, of probability:

There was sufficient presence of mind to remove the corpse; . . . (1842)

There was sufficient presence of mind (it is supposed) to remove the corpse; . . . (1845, p. 190)

* * *

It was a peculiarity of . . . (1842)

It must have been a peculiarity of . . . (1845, p. 173)

* * *

Thus, in the latter instance, *the body would not sink at all* . . . (1842)

Thus, in the latter instance, *the body, as a general rule, would not sink at all* . . . (1845, p. 171)

* * *

. . . would not be an increase in a ratio merely direct, but in one highly accumulative. (1842)

. . . would not be an increase in a ratio merely arithmetical, but in one highly geometrical, or accumulative. (1845, p. 163)

Poe restated his erroneous conclusions in a probabilist context. Formulated by consistently selecting the most likely alternative, these conclusions detail an occurrence.²⁰ This description proves false in reality, but still has merits in fiction, and Poe found his creativity stirred by this different approach. His fascination with this method probably inspired him to experiment further in "The Purloined Letter," in spite of his growing dislike for the detective-story genre.²¹

III

In sum, Poe displays two literary personalities which are noticeable in the two versions of "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt." The first is egotistical, arrogant, and, perhaps, megalomaniac. He failed in his original goal because he placed too much faith in newspaper accounts, and their insufficient facts lead him to false conclusions. In 1845, Poe's psychological drive to assert his superiority over his audience diminished to the benefit of his artistic genius. "The Purloined Letter," considered by many—including myself—as a paramount example of the ratiocination theme, is a product of the latter period. Freed from a role as the agent of his creator's reasoning in the Rogers case and in a more conducive intellectual approach, Dupin gains a personality in "The Purloined Letter," where he becomes a being capable of pursuing revenge for its own sake. Poe's constant experimentation in theme and form sharpened his craftsmanship by distinguishing the effective literary devices he had created from the bad which he would never repeat. The evolving texts of "Marie Rogêt" could not salvage the tale, although they did provide a partial foundation for the success of this last of the Dupin stories.

NOTES

1. I wish to thank Professors Benjamin Franklin Fisher IV, of Hahnemann Medical College, and Richard P. Benton, of Trinity College, for information and kind assistance.
2. Edgar Allan Poe, *Tales* (New York, 1845), pp. 151-152.
3. John Walsh, *Poe the Detective: The Curious Circumstances behind "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt"* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1968), pp. 47, 51-58. Although Walsh presents both sides to the question of the validity of Mrs. Loss's confession, William K. Wimsatt tends to discount it in "Poe and the Mystery of Mary

Rogers," *PMLA*, 56 (1941), 230-248. However, Poe apparently accepted reports of the confession as valid.

4. Such conclusions are reached by Walsh, p. 72; also, see Richard P. Benton, "'The Mystery of Marie Rogêt'—a Defense," *SSF*, 6 (1968), 150.
5. L.II:328. In that same letter, Poe criticized Evert Duyckinck's choices for *Tales*. He felt that the editorial slant toward the analytic stories did not represent his different types of fiction.
6. Such a shift in the level of Poe's arrogance can be explained also by G. R. Thompson's theory of an alternation from serious to humorous Gothic in the tales in *Great Short Works of Edgar Allan Poe* (New York, 1970), pp. 18-27.
7. All quotations from "Marie Rogêt" will be cited parenthetically within the text. Passages from 1842-43 are from *Snowden's Lady's Companion*; 1845 passages are from *Tales*. The relative position of each passage will be cited using *Tales* as a standard reference.
8. On the basis of these and other changes, we may also surmise that the element of sexuality was intentionally kept muted. Such purification had earlier governed revisions in "A Tale of Jerusalem" and "Lionizing," and a concession to Victorian delicacy was not above Poe the pragmatic editor.
9. This is now called the Lorimer Graham copy of *Tales*. The alteration is on p. 152. Permission to use the quotation is through the courtesy of the Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas at Austin.
10. On the importance of punctuation, Poe wrote: "It does not seem to be known that, even when the sense is perfectly clear, a sentence may be deprived of half its force—its spirit—its point—by improper punctuation. For the want of a comma, it often occurs that an axiom appears a paradox, or that a sarcasm is converted into a sermonoid." H.XVI:130.
11. I am again indebted to Professor Benton for a letter to me describing facets of Poe's personality. He stresses that Poe the man is not necessarily identical with Poe the writer-critic. A confusion of the two has often appeared in critical articles on the tales of ratiocination. [For an example, see Robert Daniel, "Poe's Detective God," *Furioso*, 6 (1951), 48.] Of all the tales, I believe that "Marie Rogêt" contains the most of Poe the man. In the 1842 version his ego was involved. In similar letters to George Roberts (editor of the *Nation*) and Joseph Evans Snodgrass (editor of the *Saturday Visiter*), Poe wrote that the tale would "give renewed impetus to investigation" of the Mary Rogers case while exciting public attention (L.I:200-202). Although the letters were no doubt a sales pitch for the story, Poe probably did think these investigations would occur. But the writer-critic was the master over the man in the effectiveness of "Marie Rogêt" in 1842; and the subordination of the influence of the man was further accomplished in the 1845 version. Any future reference to Poe's personality in this essay will be indicative of his literary personality.
12. Poe's disenchantment with his ratiocination tales has already been indicated in the letter to Cooke, *supra*, p. 3.
13. Walsh, p. 52.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 88.

15. For ampler analysis of the cryptogram efforts, see Charles S. Brigham, *Edgar Allan Poe's Contribution to Alexander's Weekly Messenger* (Worcester, Mass., 1943).
16. Poe had similar misfortunes in his campaign against plagiarism; see Nelson F. Adkins, "'A Chapter on American Cribbage': Poe and Plagiarism," *PBSA*, 42 (1948), 169–210.
17. Poe had experimented with deduction in "Murders" in Dupin's conclusion that the murderer was not human based on the testimonies of the murderer's "voice." But the primary method in the tale was causal analysis.
18. Robert D. Jacobs, *Poe: Journalist and Critic* (Baton Rouge, La., 1969), p. 236.
19. On the relationship between Minister D—, Dupin, and Poe, see Liahna Klenman Babenar, "The Shadow's Shadow: The Motif of the Double in Edgar Allan Poe's 'The Purloined Letter,'" *MDAC*, 1 (1972), 21–32.
20. My theory about probability to stir artistic imagination in the writing of "The Purloined Letter" and the second version of "Marie Rogêt" is akin to Benton's idea (p. 150) of Poe's anticipating the modern practice of model building. The difference between our interpretations is that Benton stresses Poe's desire to recreate the true events of a mystery, and that I claim that his probabilistic method in "Marie Rogêt" (especially the 1845 version) and "The Purloined Letter" is a key to the understanding of his creativity. For a differing perspective, see Sidney P. Moss, "Poe as a Probabilist in Forgue's Critique of the Tales," in Richard P. Benton, ed., *New Approaches to Poe: A Symposium* (Hartford, Conn., 1970), pp. 4–13.
21. Jacobs explains: "Poe would have had the imagination soar completely beyond actuality and give us emotional experience that by its very nature was inimitable and untranslatable, experience that could be gained by the unimaginative only through art." See p. 243.

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CONTENTS

VOLUME XLI · WINTER 1977 · NUMBER 2

Sixteenth-Century Imprints in the University Libraries:	103
140 Additions	
M. A. SHAABER	
Piccolo, Ma Con Gran Vagghezza: A New Source for <i>Hamlet</i> ?	119
THERESA SURIANO ORMSBY-LENNON	
“Merry Passages and Jeasts” and Sir Nicholas L’Estrange	149
H. F. LIPPINCOTT	
Simms’s Early Short Stories	163
MARY ANN WIMSATT	
S. Weir Mitchell and the Germination of a Poem	180
JAMES M. GIBSON	
The Elusive <i>Visions d’Oger le Dannoys</i>	186
JUDITH M. DAVIS	
Index to Volumes XXXI–XL	189

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* John Welsh Centennial Emeritus Professor of English History and Literature; Curator of the Horace Howard Furness Memorial Library.

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Enrico da Susa. Henrici de Segusio Cardinalis Hostiensis, summa aurea . . . Cum antiquis Nic. Superantii, atque . . . F. Martini Abbatis, . . . Azonis & Accursij . . . Adnotationibus. . . . Basileæ apud Thomam Guarinum, Anno M D LXIII. (. . . Mense Martio.) fol.)⁽⁶⁾ a-z⁶ A-Xx⁶. cols. 1-1554. (Yarnall.)

Erasmus, Desiderius. Institutio principis Christiani . . . Præcepta Isocratis de regno administrando ad Nicoclem regem, codem [Erasmo] interprete. Coloniae apud Euchariū Ceruicornum, anno M.D.XXV. mense Ianuario. 8°. a-i⁸ (-i8).

Eutropius. Eutropij de gestis Romanorum libri decem. Parisiis Ex officina Simonis Colinæi. 1539 8°. a-h⁸ i⁴. ff. 2-68.

Faber, Petrus. Agonisticon. . . siue, de re athletica ludisque veterum gymnicis, musicis, atque Circensibus Spicilegiorum tractatus . . . Lugduni, Apud Franciscum Fabrum. cl^o. I^o. xcii. fol. \tilde{a} ⁴ \tilde{c} ⁴ \tilde{i} ⁴ a-zz⁴ 3a⁶. pp. 1-363. ¶*In the imprint Lugduni is blacked out and Geneuae stamped in below the date.*

Fiordibello, Antonio. Antonius Florebello de auctoritate ecclesiæ . . . Coloniæ . . . excudebat Iaspar Gennepæus . . . M. D. XLV. 4°. A-K⁴ (-K4, *blank*). (Lea.)

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- Ein Sendbrieff . . . an einen guten Freund/ von der gedruckten Schmehezettel / darinnen von vrsachen jhrer enturlaubung vnwarhaftig gehandelt wird. [Regensburg, Heinrich Geissler,] 1562. 4°. A⁴.
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Foglietta, Uberto. Vberti Folietac ex vniuersa historia rerum Europæ suorum temporum. Coniuratio Ioannis Ludouici Flisci. Tumultus Neapolitani. Cædes Petri Ludouici Farnesij Placētæ Ducis. . . . Genuæ . . . Apud Hieronymum Bartolum. 1587. 4°. a⁴ b² A-AA⁴ BB². ff. 1-97.

Frosch, Johann. Hic continentur Apollo ad suumipsius ac Musarū chorum. De duodecimi mensibus anni. De Apollinis & musarum discessu. Asclepiadeum obiter adiectum. 4°. [A]⁶. ¶[A]1^v: Ioannes Batrachus iunior, Iuxta . . . Sylvano Ottmar Chalcographo Augustano, S.d. . . . Idibus Februarii. Anno. M. D. XXVIII.

Fulke, William. A comfortable Sermon of Faith, in temptations and afflictions. . . . Imprinted at London by John Awdeley . . . 1574. 8°. B.L. A-G⁴. S.T.C. 11422.

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Gambari, Pietro Andrea. Tractatus de officio, atque auctoritate legati de latere . . . Ab Augustino Ferentillo . . . recognitus. . . . Venetiis. Apud Vincentium Valgrisium. M.D.LXXI. fol. *⁴ a-f⁶ g⁸ A-Cc⁶ Dd⁸ (-Dd⁸, presumably blank). pp. 1-326.

Gamerius, Hannardus. Relliquiae Sanctorum. Contra hæreticos præsentis sæculi, . . . Patrum authoritate defensæ . . . [Ingolstadii, Alexander & Samuel Weissenhorn,] Anno D. M. LXIII. 4°. A-B⁴. ¶*In verse.*

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Jābir al Hayan. Geberis . . . summa perfectionis magisterij in sua natura . . . Libriq̄z inuestigationis magisterij, & Testamenti eiusdem Geberis, ac Aurei Triū uerborum Libelli, et Auicennæ . . . Mineralium additiōe . . . (Venetijs apud Petrum Schœffer . . . 1542. . . . Apud Dominum Ioannem Baptistarum pederzanū . . .) 8°. [A]⁸ B-R⁸. ff. 1-126. ¶*Includes:* Epistolæ Alexandri Macedonum regis; Authoris ignoti, philosophici Lapidis secreta . . . describentis, opusculum; Merlini allegoria; Rachaidibi, Veradiani, Rodiani, & Kanide Fragmentum.

John of Salisbury. Ioannis Saresberiensis polycraticus: Siue De nugis Curialium, & vestigiis Philosophorum, libri octo. Lugduni Batauorum, Ex officina Plantiniana, Apud Franciscum Raphelengium. cl. I. xcv. 8°. *⁸ A-Z⁸ a-p⁸ q⁴. pp. 1-597.

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Rome. Confraternitas Sacratissimi Corporis Christi. Capitula statuta, et ordinationes, . . . Confraternitatis Sacratissimi Corporis Christi in Ecclesia Mineruæ almæ vrbis Romæ. Romæ apud Stephanum Sabiensem, & Fratres. 1542. Mensis Februarii. (Romæ apud Valerium Doricum.) 4°. A⁴ b-d⁴ e². (Lea.)

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[Silva, Feliciano de.] Segunda Comedia de Celestina enlaqual se trata delos amores de vn cauallero llamado Felides: y vna donzella de clara sangre llamada Polandria . . . Vendese . . . enla ciudad de Anuers, ala enseña dela polla grassa, y en paris ala enseña dela samaritana, cabe sanct benito [por la viuda Birckmann, c. 1550]. 8°. a–z⁸ A–E⁸ F⁴.

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Piccolo, Ma Con Gran Vagghezza: A New Source for *Hamlet*?

THERESA SURIANO ORMSBY-LENNON*

Tutta volta . . . si debbe ricordare, che talhora un piccolo adornamento, dà gran vagghezza a una pittura, per se stessa bellissima; & oltre á ciò deve havere á memoria, che la lancia d'Achille, non harebbe sparso molto sangue, se la penna d'Omero non havesse versato molto inchiostro. Dico questo, non perche io voglia [sic] fare queste comparationi, le quali non si potrebon fare senza adulacione e temerità, ma solamente per mostrare, che ancor che i meriti d'un' uomo sieno grandi, tutta volta eglino possono esser fatti piu chiari, & illustri da' semplici scritti di coloro, che hanno voglia di non parer d'esser nati al mondo per far numero & ombra.

Remigio Nannini, *Orationi militari*, Dedicatory Preface, 1560.

THE TEXT

Argomento

AMLETO, figliastro di Fengone Re di Datia havea finto molt' anni d' esser pazzo, ma non era creduto pazzo da senno, ma che fingesse la pazzia per qualche suo disegno, per tanto Fengone fu consigliato, che fingesse di voler far lungo viaggio, e rinchiudessi in una camera medesima la madre e'l figliuolo credendo, che il figliuolo scoprirebbe alla madre secretamente i suoi disegni havendone alcuno, e gli fu dato per consiglio, che nascondesse uno in quella camera, che poi gli potessi raccontare i loro ragionamenti. Piacque il consiglio al Re, e fingendo andare in viaggio rinchiuse la madre, e'l figlio in una camera e quel consigliere nascose sotto il letto. Trovandosi Amleto a questa foggia serrato e bramando di mostrare alla madre, che non era pazzo, cominciò a dubitare, che quivi non fosse alcuno, che lo sentisse, così seguitando di finger la pazzia cominciò a saltar in quà, e in là, e rovinando quel letto dove era nascosto il consigliero sentì, che quivi era un huomo, e poi che gli fu saltato un pezzo a dosso, prese una spada, e l'amazzò. La madre presente a questo spettacolo cominciò alzar la voce, & egli riprendendola le mostrò, che ciò ch'egli havea fatto, l'havea fatto giustamente, e disse.

* Graduate Student in English, University of Pennsylvania.

A che fine, infame e sceleratissima femina, cerchi tu di coprire con finto lamento il tuo grave peccato? Non sai tu, che a guisa di lasciva puttana cercāo ogn'hor nuovi mariti, ti sei congiunta in matrimonio con un'infame, e scelerata persona, & abbracci caramente colui, che con le sue proprie mani amazzò mio padre tuo primo marito? E con dishoneste carezze, vai adulando a colui, ch'amazzò il padre di me tuo figliuolo? Questa è natura di bestia, però che, anche le cavalle si maritano a quegli staloni, c'hanno vinto combattendo i lor primi mariti, e questo andar cercando: & abbracciando ogn'ora nuovi huomini non dimostra altro, senon che tu hai cancellato della memoria tua l'amore, e l'affettione del tuo primo marito. Et io non senza proposito mi son finto pazzo, e mi fingo ancora, però, ch'io dubito, e ho dubitato sempre che colui che amazzò crudelmente il mio fratello non amazzasse anche me, onde io giudicai, che il dimostrarmi piu tosto pazzo, che savio, dovesse grandemente giovare alla salute della vita mia. Nondimeno io ho havuto sempre in animo di vendicar la morte di mio padre, e non fo altro, che aspettar l'occasione, e la commodità del tempo, perche ogni luogo, & ogni tempo non è sempre buono a far ciò che l'huomo vuole, e contra un'huomo immite, e crudele, bisogna usare tutta l'industria, e tutta la forza dell'ingegno. A te madre adunque non occorre piu dolerti della mia pazzia, anzi deveresti piu tosto lamentarti, e dolerti della tua vergogna e della tua vita infame, però piangi pure il vitio della tua propria mente, e non di quella d'altrui. Ricordati intanto di star cheta, e di tener secreto quel, ch'io ho fatto, e quel, ch'io ho detto, e s'io ho morto costui, l'ho morto giustamente, e cosi fosse stato il mio patrigno come egli è stato un suo consigliero. Ma egli non m'uscirà delle mani, e l'amazzerò in ogni modo, e farò, che conoscerà, che questa mia pazzia sarà, stata una cattiva pazzia per lui.

* * *

To what end, O infamous and villainous woman, do you try to conceal with feigned lament your grave sin? Do you not know that, in the manner of a wanton whore, seeking every hour different husbands, you have joined yourself in matrimony to a disgraceful and evil person, and that you embrace so tenderly that man who with

his very own hands killed my father your first husband? And with deceitful caresses, you continue to flatter him who killed the father of (myself) your own son? This is in the nature of beasts, for even mares marry those stallions who have won in fighting their first husbands; this is encouraged (sought). So, embracing a new (different) man every hour proves nothing if not that you have erased from your memory the love and affection of your first husband. I have not pretended to be mad without purpose, and I continue to pretend because I doubt and have always doubted that he who brutally murdered my brother would refrain from killing me as well; hence, I swore that behaving madly, rather than sensibly, should prove to be of great advantage to the health (welfare) of my life. Nevertheless, I have always harbored in my soul the desire to avenge the death of my father, and I do nothing but await the proper occasion and the convenient time, since every place and every time (all places and all times) does not always seem useful for realizing that which a man wants, and so one needs to wield all one's resources and all one's powers of ingenuity against such an evil and hostile man. Consequently, mother, you must no longer complain of my madness; on the contrary, you should be mourning your own shame and disgrace all the more; therefore, weep over your own vices, and not over those of others. Remember, in the meantime, to keep quiet, and to hold secret, that which I have done and that which I have said, for if I have killed this man, I have killed him justly: would that it had been my stepfather in his own counsellor's place. Yet he will not escape from my hands, and I will murder him in any way possible, and I will accomplish this in such a way that he will recognize that my madness has been a very bad one for him (Remigio Nannini, *Orationi in materia civile* [1561], pp. 377-378; translation mine).

ONE does not venture to suggest yet another source for Shakespeare's *Hamlet* without being somewhat overwhelmed by the mass of the scholarship¹—and the ingenious variety of conjecture—which the play has continued to generate. Nonetheless, when my attention was drawn toward a sixteenth-century Italian volume unnoticed before as a possible source for the closet scene,² I too plunged

into the lion's den, fascinated in part by the existence of a work to which Shakespearean scholars had never (as far as I know) alluded.

The book, entitled *Orationi in materia civile, e criminale, tratte da gli historici Greci, e Latini, antichi, e moderni . . .* (Venice, 1561), is a compilation of significant orations or speeches delivered by ancient and modern statesmen, politicians, and other well-known public figures, as recorded in the writings of Latin, medieval, Greek, and Renaissance historians.³ Its editor and translator, Remigio Nannini (1521–81), a Dominican who was born in Florence,⁴ but lived the greater part of his life in Venice, did not refrain from exercising a certain imaginative license in his transcriptions. Such endeavors, carried out in the pursuit of eloquence, would have been considered characteristic of a man whom biographers describe as a versatile philosopher, sound historian, and distinguished orator:

La grande capacità dell'Ingegno, l'indefessa applicazione agli Studj, ma molto più l'Universalità maravigliosa di tutte le Scienze, che possedeva, lo portarono al sommo grado di Riputazione trà Dotti di quella Stagione, e non meno comparve nelle Cattedre Maestro profondissimo di Teologia nell'ordine, ed Oratore eloquentissimo nelle più accreditate Basiliche, di quello si facesse ammirare di portentosa Erudizione Sagra, e Profana, Istorico, Filosofo, Canonista peritissimo e gentilissimo Poeta.⁵

The superlatives continue:

Fù Historico elegantissimo, e Predicatore di singolare dottrina, & eloquenza, e de' primi del suo tempo; e diedesi con molto affetto, per ricrearsi dopò la fatica de' gravi studij, alle belle Lettere, così nella Poesia, come nella Prosa, e Latina, e Toscana.⁶

The passage in question—Nannini's rendition of Amlethus's (Saxo's spelling) harangue upon his mother's lasciviousness, as set down in Saxo Grammaticus's third book of his *Historia Danica*⁷—does not read, at every point, like a careful, close translation. There are, as we shall see, interpolations, additions, embellishments of the original which could prove to be illuminating and, in some cases, crucial, divergences from Saxo's version of the harangue and from that of François Belleforest, the French belle lettrist who is almost universally thought⁸ to have provided in his *Histoires tragiques*⁹ a rich source for the *Ur-Hamlet* (if it did indeed exist), for Shakespeare's various versions of the play,¹⁰ including the First Quarto, as well as

for the plodding German revenge drama *Der bestrafte Brudermord*, an uninventive version of the Hamlet story, probably brought over to the Continent by English actors before 1626 (and based, most likely, on the "lost" English play¹¹).

Before one can even begin to argue for Shakespeare's possible acquaintance with Nannini's anthology, one must face the perennial problem arising in all scholarly attempts to track down books which the dramatist might have read. We do know that Shakespeare was familiar with certain classical texts.¹² We do know that he probably read Italian and French: both Mario Praz¹³ and R. Warwick Bond¹⁴ suggest that Shakespeare may well have read parts of Giraldi's *Hecatommithi* and several Italian plays in the original. What we *don't* know is which of all the books (both known and lost) that might have been available to Shakespeare left *superficially* indiscernible traces on his writing: unfortunately, the products of an incandescently creative mind do not readily yield up such secrets (or their genesis).

It is still undecided, for example, whether Shakespeare ever read *Saxo Grammaticus* at all. A. P. Stabler believes that Belleforest's *novella* was the only prose version of the story to which Shakespeare referred.¹⁵ The playwright's direct acquaintance with Saxo is also called into question by Bullough in his introduction to the sources of Hamlet.¹⁶ Yet others feel that Shakespeare's command of Latin may have been surprisingly masterful. Kenneth Muir argues that, in Prospero's farewell to his art, Shakespeare's rendering of Medea's analogous invocation from Ovid's *Metamorphoses* shows a distinct improvement over Golding's translation: the dramatist's choice of words, Muir points out, is strikingly faithful to the complex implications of the original.¹⁷

A radical, and more tantalizing, hypothesis concerning Shakespeare's capacity to read difficult, even abstruse, Latin comes from Hereward Price's letter to the *Review of English Studies*.¹⁸ Attempting to rebut J. A. K. Thomson's argument that Shakespeare was "deficient in classical scholarship" Price focusses on a "piece of evidence about Shakespeare's knowledge of Latin that no scholar has yet offered for serious consideration":

There is in the Folger Library at Washington a copy of W. Lambarde's APXAIONOMIA, *sive de priscis anglorum legibus libri . . .*, published in 1564.

The book is written in Latin. The body of the volume gives the Anglo-Saxon laws on one page, on the page opposite a Latin translation.

The title-page bears a signature which reads, as nearly as it can be deciphered, W Shakspere. It has been fully described by J. Q. Adams in *The Folger Shakespeare Memorial Library . . . A Report on Progress 1931–1941* . . . also in an article ‘A New Signature of Shakespeare’s’ in the *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library*, xxvii.¹⁹

Experts of the U.S. Archives “found no evidence” that the signature was not contemporary with Shakespeare; their comparison of individual letters with those of the poet’s acknowledged signatures led them to believe that the signature in Lambarde’s book was most likely from the same hand. Others too are convinced that the signature is not forged.²⁰ Price believes the book to be enormously important, since its vocabulary, “not covered by what schoolboys learn,” implies that the dramatist “had a firmer knowledge of Latin and a wider reading than scholars usually give him credit for.” If the “exhaustive tests” allow us to credit Shakespeare with possession of at least one book—a book which would not have found its way into the hands of a man whose intellectual curiosity went no further than the demands of the theater, then such evidence of broad, diversified learning might lend greater validity to the hypothesis that Shakespeare did read Saxo, whose style, like Lambarde’s, is elaborate and convoluted. The difficulty of translation would not have been, for Shakespeare, as insurmountable an obstacle as scholars previously thought.

Furthermore, if Joseph Quincy Adams’ speculation concerning Shakespeare’s literary interest in Anglo-Saxon were proved correct,²¹ the dramatist’s motives for going to Saxo, who writes about Anglo-Danish history, would be more plausible. Not only would Shakespeare have wanted to know what the Dane had to say about Hamlet; he would have been impelled toward the work by an overarching concern which surpassed the demands of a single play.

Whether Shakespeare did or did not cultivate an interest in Anglo-Saxon, I am not qualified to pursue the matter any further. That he may indeed have been able to read more than basic Latin, and Italian as well, I am willing to accept, given the evidence at my disposal so far. But why should this very busy dramatist take time out to read a volume by a friar called Nannini whose name was by no means a

commonplace among English men of letters? Granted, the range of Nannini's learning and scholarly achievement was modestly celebrated in northern Italy, especially in Venice where he

ottenne quella eccellenza, che da gl'intendenti fu benissimo conosciuta, per mezzo delle seguenti opere dal suo dottissimo ingegno felicemente prodotte, cioè parte scritte in Latino, e parte in Toscano.²²

England, however, was another matter. Still, two factors might have come together to bring Nannini to Shakespeare's attention before the poet wrote his most perplexing tragedy.

As Mario Praz reminds us, it is well established that Shakespeare almost certainly knew John Florio, the "apostle of Italian culture in England."²³

Both Florio and Shakespeare moved in the same circle; they were fellow-members of Southampton's household. Florio was a teacher in both the Italian and French languages . . . Florio's vocabulary has a prevailing Lombardo-Venetian character, Venice is for him the foremost Italian town, as can be seen in the eighth chapter of the *First Fruites*; this may help us to understand why the local allusions in Shakespeare's Italian plays are limited to Venice and the neighbouring towns.²⁴

A man as prolific and ubiquitous as Florio may have come across Nannini's work in the course of his own labors, particularly if all things Venetian intrigued him. Since Nannini himself translated part of a history of Venice from the Latin in 1576,²⁵ it is possible that the equally indefatigable Florio knew of Nannini and his scholarly ventures. Either the Italian exile²⁶ or anyone with whom he was acquainted (and he had a wide acquaintance)²⁷ could have mentioned the Nannini volume to Shakespeare. This is speculative, of course, but since Nannini's anthology, along with another of his works, *Orationi militari*, includes speeches by Coriolanus, Brutus, Marc Antony, Julius Caesar²⁸—figures around whom Shakespeare constructed other plays—the dramatist possibly browsed through *Orationi in materia civile*.

Moreover, Shakespeare himself may have come across an English translation of another of Nannini's compendia entitled *Civill Considerations upon Many and Sundrie Histories*.²⁹ This book is a somewhat more benign, less coolly analytical, version of Machiavelli's blatantly unorthodox *The Prince*. Nannini's advice to heads of state,

although shrewdly pragmatic at times (and replete with classical and contemporary examples), is tempered by oblique appeals to Christian ethics.³⁰ Undoubtedly, this kind of work was neither unique, nor unusual enough to capture Shakespeare's interest by virtue of its genre and content alone. Many "imitations" of *The Prince* existed; so did a series of attacks upon it.³¹ The English version of *Civill Considerations* appeared, however, in 1601, at approximately the same time that *Hamlet* was supposed to have been written: it has been argued that Machiavellian echoes can be heard in the play, where the theme of "governing" gains prominence at various points.³² Although there is no way of proving, at this juncture, that Shakespeare did consult Nannini's treatise on princes, there is no way of absolutely disproving it either. Should the book have come Shakespeare's way, either via Florio who seems to have been very familiar with Machiavelli's work³³ or via the poet's own inquisitiveness about the "behavior of princes" as analyzed from differing perspectives,³⁴ the poet might have become sufficiently interested to consult Nannini's selection of "civil matters." (In Nannini's *Civill Considerations* there appears, early in the work, one reference to Saxo and to Anglo-Saxon history:³⁵ could Shakespeare have noticed this allusion—and, with Hamlet as Prince and Dane in mind, turned to Nannini's "civil" anthology in hopes of finding an amplification of Saxo, perhaps from a contemporary political or moral vantage point?)³⁶

Obviously, everything I am suggesting can be interpreted as conjecture, and justly so. Nevertheless, I hope to show that, by comparing certain turns of phrase and certain statements in Nannini's version of the closet scene with analogous sections in Saxo, Belleforest, and Shakespeare, one finds evidence for contending that Shakespeare may have gone directly to the Italian work.

Each of Nannini's orations is prefaced by an "argomento" (a summary of the narrative up to that point) and followed by an "effetto" (a description of the speech's impact and the subsequent events in that "history"). In his selection from the *Historia Danica*, Nannini chooses to include two speeches only, both of them by Amleto: the first is the now famous harangue; the second, the prince's self-justification before the Danish populace who have heard that he has killed his stepfather.

In Nannini's version of the closet scene, Hamlet's harangue embodies roughly the same general pattern of ideas as does the prince's castigation of his mother in Saxo (in neither version is the Queen given any lines of her own). Yet Nannini's Amleto utters two statements, not in Saxo, that are remarkable for their foreshadowing of what Shakespeare's protagonist says. After Amleto advises his mother to lament her own failings, and to keep his revelations to herself, he adds:

e s'io ho morto costui, l'ho morto giustamente, e così fosse stato il mio patrigno come egli è stato un suo consigliero.

Belleforest did not include this remark in his version of the episode, either. One remembers Hamlet's reaction after lifting up the arras and seeing Polonius:

Thou wretched, rash, intruding fool, farewell!
I took thee for thy better.³⁷

Bullough glosses the following passage in Saxo as a possible source for line 31:

But a friend of Feng, gifted more with assurance than judgment, declared that the unfathomable cunning of such a mind [Amleth's] could not be detected by any vulgar plot.³⁸

But neither he nor anyone else alludes to the first part of line 32, "I took thee for thy better," as having its possible origin in an earlier prose version of the speech (the line *does* appear in the First Quarto and that in itself, I suspect, is significant). It would be rash indeed to posit a definite, unassailable connection between Shakespeare's reworking of the harangue and that of Nannini. Nonetheless, it is the case that in neither Saxo nor Belleforest does the hero express any regret that the man murdered had turned out to be someone other than the King. When considering the implications of Nannini's interpolation one must, of course, keep in mind the radical difference between the nature of Shakespeare's plot and those of Saxo and Belleforest. Whereas, in the latter, Fengon (Claudius) deliberately pretends to be away on affairs of state (and Amlethus-Amleth is so informed), in Shakespeare's play the hero knows, while he is closeted with his mother, that Claudius remains in the vicinity, since Hamlet has just refrained from killing him at prayer. One can argue

that Saxo and Belleforest would have had no incentive to attribute to their protagonist such a vindictive wish because, in both prose versions, Amlethus-Amleth knew of the King's alleged absence from court. But he did not necessarily have to believe that his stepfather was so very far away: the King could easily be keeping himself out of sight (as he was)³⁹—and the younger man's shrewd skepticism would surely not fail him now.

Hence, Nannini's inclusion of Amleto's wish may not be a superfluous aside. Without any prompting from his source (Saxo), the Italian could imagine Amleto thinking, and saying, that which would be firmly grounded in the hero's habitual doubt and chariness. Although neither Saxo nor Belleforest offers any indisputable clues as to whether Amleth suspected his stepfather's proximity, Nannini may have wanted to incorporate the suspicion in the form of an ambiguous, and bitter, afterthought. This interpretation, albeit tentative, gathers strength from another commentary on the closet scene, found in Jackson Barry's article on the structural peculiarities of *Hamlet*. Barry sees the killing of Polonius as a "deceptive cadence,"⁴⁰ a false resolution which Shakespeare creates by briefly sustaining dramatic tension from the moment of Hamlet's outcry "now could I drink hot blood" in III.ii.393 to the outburst in the closet scene (III.iv.14ff.) where "it [the tension] is discharged in the rage which spurts out *as though the hoped for revenge were being consummated*."⁴¹ As Barry suggests, in the narrative versions of the Hamlet story (those of Saxo and Belleforest), the hero is not, at the moment in which he stabs the hidden figure, "*especially keyed up*" for wreaking revenge upon the King; in neither case does the hero say anything either before or after the stabbing that would encourage one to believe that he was *hoping* to kill the King. Yet Shakespeare transforms this material

using a more-or-less indifferent narrative incident as a dramatic crux—important in the plot as the cause of Laertes' fatal passion for revenge; important morally as part of the burden of guilt Hamlet carries as minister and scourge; and important in the emotional sweep as a brief, short-circuited, false ending siphoning off some of the too high tension in anticipation of the true ending. It is this latter effect as "deceptive cadence" in the emotional pattern of the play which . . . will be most apparent in the "feel" of a performance.⁴²

This surrogate crescendo, and release, of vengeful passion, which Barry finds an integral indispensable aspect of the play's dramatic structure, does not course through analogous scenes in either the First Quarto⁴³ or the *Brudermord*. Whether the First Quarto is a stolen and abbreviated version of the Second Quarto,⁴⁴ or, as Virgil Whitaker believes, a pirated condensation and distortion of Shakespeare's first draft of *Hamlet* which has since perished,⁴⁵ or even an actors' memorial reconstruction of a mixture of the *Ur-Hamlet* and the Second Quarto, the uniqueness of Shakespeare's claim to the "deceptive" resolution could not be challenged. It is not likely that if Kyd, or any other author of an *Ur-Hamlet*, had made his protagonist so ripe for vengeance immediately before the closet scene, any such exacerbation of the revenge motif would not have been exploited by a cunning imitator. Consequently, one may suggest that Nannini's singular reference to the man who *should* have been in his counselor's place, if marked by Shakespeare, would have lent the playwright a cue—a clue to the potentialities of dramatizing a specific set of emotional responses (in the hero) that function as the retributive nexus of the whole work and that generate, in the mind of Shakespeare, a series of thematic and structural implications accidentally presaged by Nannini's intuitive reference. (Amleto had no doubts as to the ethical validity of revenge, but the Dominican might have: the regret that the dead man is not the King hotly follows Amleto's assertion that the man he did murder was murdered justly. Nannini might have been trying to adhere to the revenge code and the Christian one simultaneously, if not convincingly.)

The second statement that might have drawn Shakespeare's eye is to be found in the final sentence of Amleto's oration to his mother:

Ma egli non m'uscirà delle mani, e l'amazzerò in ogni modo, e farò, che conoscerà, che questa mia pazzia sarà, stata una cattiva pazzia per lui.

There is an ambiguity of expression in the Italian which gives one pause: as it stands, the last part of the sentence can mean either (a) the King will have recognized my madness as deleterious to both his health and crown or (b) the King will have understood that my seemingly irrational behavior was designed to drive him mad. A further meaning can be gleaned from so compressed a statement if one reinterprets the second meaning in the light of the first: "my madness

will have become his madness; that which I feign now, he will actually experience later." The vendetta, as Nannini perceives it, includes a reverse symmetry that is poetic, as well as just.

Neither Saxo's *Historia Danica* nor Belleforest's *Histoires tragiques* contains any one parallel allusion to the strategy of the revenge-design either equally succinct or equally productive in its implications. In Saxo's version, Amlethus's conception of tactics sounds abstract and somewhat formulaic: "Contra obscurum immitemque animum altioribus ingenii modis uti convenit."⁴⁶ Belleforest's Amleth is more loquacious than Saxo's, but his words, for all their digressiveness and profusion, convey an intention to be resourceful no different from that of the Dane's hero:

Aussi faut-il que contre un meschant desloyal, cruel & discourtois homme, on use des plus gentiles inventions & forbes, desquelles se peut adviser un bon esprit, pour ne descouvrir point son entreprise, veu que la force n'estant point de mon costé: c'est raison que les ruses, dissimulations, & secréttes menees y donnent ordre.⁴⁷

Only Nannini introduces the notion that Amleto's behavior is precisely calculated, not only to wreak physical vengeance, but to wear down and to subvert the King's mental defenses as well.

Shakespeare's villain, Claudius, chronically shows signs of suffering such a fate. In iv.iii, Claudius confronts Hamlet for the first time since the murder of Polonius, and their conversation deals almost exclusively with that incident:

King. Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

Ham. At supper

King. "At supper"? where?

Ham. Not where he eats, but where he is eaten . . . Your worm is your only emperor for diet. We fat all creatures else to fat us, and we fat ourselves for maggots. Your fat king and your lean beggar, is but variable service, two dishes, but to one table. . . .

King. Where is Polonius?

Ham. In heaven; send thither to see; if your messenger find him not there, seek him i' the other place yourself. . . .

Ham. . . . Farewell, dear mother.

King. Thy loving father, Hamlet.

Ham. My mother; father and mother is man and wife; man and wife is one flesh, and so, my mother. (iv.iii. 16–51)

Hamlet's caustic replies strengthen (in the audience's mind) the association between the death it has recently witnessed and the King's eventual murder by the same hand. Moreover, the hero's scathing bravado ("seek him i' the other place yourself"), coupled with his acerb farewell to "dear mother," brings into relief once more the source of Hamlet's anguish and "madness"—his uncle's fratricide and subsequent act of incest. After Claudius dismisses Hamlet (to England), the King utters a blistering soliloquy, which concludes:

Do it, England;
For like the hectic in my blood he rages,
And thou must cure me; till I know 'tis done,
How'er my haps, my joys were ne'er begun. (iv.iii.64–67)

The King's words, raw and red as the English cicatrice, betray a fiercely tortured, hounded spirit. Claudius cannot get Hamlet out of his system; the analogy with "hectic" is more appropriate than the King may realize. A "hectic" fever is a recurrent, *habitual*, constitutional malaise often associated with consumption⁴⁸—and, in a special way, such is Hamlet for his stepfather. The war of attrition is working: Claudius knows that Hamlet has become (and, alive, will continue to be) *his* disease. This reference to the "hectic" does not occur in either the First Quarto or the *Brudermord*, which suggests that the author of the *Ur-Hamlet* did not make use of the image either. Shakespeare's concise depiction of Claudius's emotional deterioration and growing vulnerability, juxtaposed, as it is, with Hamlet's allusions to the reasons for his own madness (in the same scene), could have found its catalyst not only in Nannini's verbal complexity but in his conceptual vigor as well.

Nannini's analysis of the Queen's culpability also differs from that of Saxo and Belleforest in its moral emphasis. Comparing Saxo's version of the Hamlet story to Shakespeare's, one sees obvious parallels which scholars have already remarked upon. Amlethus's reproach to his mother,

Ita nempe equae conjugum suorum victoribus maritantur; brutorum natura haec est, ut in diversa passim conjugia rapiantur,⁴⁹

can be heard in *Hamlet*, I.ii.150–151:

O God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourned longer.

So can Belleforest's concentration upon Geruthe's sensuality:

Est-ce à une Royne, & fille de Roy, de suyvre les appetits des bestes, & que tout ainsi que les jumens, s'accouplent à ceux qui ont vaincu leurs premiers maris, vous suyviez la volonté du Roy abominable.⁵⁰

As Bullough points out, Belleforest stresses the fact of incest more than Saxo; so does Shakespeare, in 1.ii.156-157:

Oh, most wicked speed, to post
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!⁵¹

But Nannini's evaluation of the Queen's behavior goes beyond the motives of licentiousness and bestiality attributed to her by both Saxo and Belleforest. Although all three writers exploit the same general themes, that of the Queen's moral decay, her lack of sexual discrimination (like the beasts whose mates have been vanquished), and her obvious failure to remember her first husband's virtue and fame, the relationship among these factors in the accomplishment of Geruthe's moral downfall is not identical in each case. Saxo's Amlethus explains his mother's actions (and her forgetfulness) in terms of sheer bestial response, as an instinctive rejection of the defeated figure in favor of the triumphant one: "hoc tibi exemplo prioris mariti memoriam exolevisse constat."⁵² Belleforest's treatment is more elaborate, and more specific in its concern with causal sequence, than is that of Saxo. His protagonist insists that Geruthe can "deface from her soul the memory of the good King's valor and virtue" only because she is thoroughly licentious:

Ah Royne Geruthe! . . . c'est la lubricité seule qui vous a effacé en l'ame la memoire des vaillances & vertus du bon Roy, vostre espoux, & mon pere: c'est un desir effrené qui a conduit la fille de Rorique à embrasser le tyran Fengon, sans respecter les ombres de Horvvendille, indigne de si estrange traictement,⁵³

and brutish:

. . . c'est a faire aux chiennes à se mesler avec plusieurs, & souhaiter le mariage & accouplement de divers masles. . .⁵⁴

Neither Saxo nor Belleforest suggests that it might be Gertrude's very failure to recall (and remember) her first husband's greatness which prompted her licentiousness: could not the memory of the "good King's" renown, if kept alive in her soul, have dissuaded her from yielding to base desires? Nannini seems to think so; and, as we shall see, so does Shakespeare.

In the Italian version of the harangue, one finds a definite parallel established between the "conquest of mares" and the Queen's forgetfulness. The hero does allude to his mother's bestiality:

E con dishoneste carezze, vai adulando a colui, ch' amazzò il padre di me tuo figliuolo? Questa è natura di bestia, però che, anche le cavalle si maritano a quegli staloni, c'hanno vinto combattendo i lor primi mariti, e questo andar cercando: & abbracciando ogn' hora nuovi huomini non dimostra altro, senon che tu hai cancellato della memoria tua l'amore, e l'affettione del tuo primo marito.

Yet Nannini has, by means of stylistic balance and syntactic reinforcement, allowed his Amleto to conflate two seemingly discrete aspects of the Queen's behavior, her bestial instincts and her moral decisions. The Prince asserts that "embracing every hour a different man *proves nothing if not that* you have erased from your memory the *love and affection* of your first husband" (translation and italics mine). Amleto lays stress upon the proof that Horvendillo's image has been eradicated, i.e., the Queen's almost immediate surrender to the "vanquisher." Significantly, Amleto does not say that his mother's embraces prove that she is lascivious. Nannini's hero first refers to the Queen's blandishments toward one who has killed the father of her son ("vai adulando a colui . . ."), declares that such behavior typifies mares who couple with their "husband's" vanquishers, then affirms the fact that the mares prefer things this way ("e questo andar cercando"), and, still using the gerundive ("abbracciando ogn' hora . . ."), finally points to the evidence of his mother's failure to keep Horvendillo's memory alive. It is striking, moreover, that at this juncture in the harangue, Amleto uses the anonymous "huomini" rather than the more dignified "mariti," a term which he employed both when likening his mother to a prostitute and when describing the horses' mating habits. Is the Queen worse than a beast of burden, her new consort ungraced by the name which Amleto freely renders the stallion?

Nannini has arranged the various pieces of his argument so that Amleto's father comes to be seen as a principle of both moral order and human love ("hai cancellato . . . l'amore e l'affettione"). In forgetting her husband, the Queen also forgets and dismisses all that he embodied: she sinks into a morass of bestial, rather than simply lascivious, existence because that which defines her humanity—her powers of rational discrimination and her capacities for profound human affection—has died along with her husband's memory. Like a mare that moves automatically toward the "conqueror," she moves toward Fengone, and, like the mare, she remains mindlessly content with her lot (for a time, at least).

It must be conceded that such general moral amnesia afflicts Belleforest's Geruthe as well. In the French version, the Queen does begin to chastise herself for her incestuous marriage while Amleth is dragging the spy's corpse out of the room:

estimant que les Dieux luy envoyassent ceste punition, pour s'estre incestueusement accouplee avec le tyran meurtrier de son espoux . . . accusant l'indiscretion naturelle, qui est la guide ordinaire de celles qui ayment tant des plaisirs du corps, que voilant la voye à toute raison, n'advisent ce qui peut s'ensuyvir de leur legereté & grande inconstance.⁵⁵

Then, after Amleth delivers his harangue, the Queen experiences, as well as shame and humiliation, great pride in beholding her son's intrepid spirit:

elle eust volontiers embrassé son fils, pour les sages admonitions qu'il luy avoit fait, & lesquelles eurent telle efficace, que sur l'heure elle esteignit les flammes de convoitise, qui l'avoient rendue amye de Fengon, pour planter encor en son coeur le souvenir des vertus de son espoux legitime, lequel elle regretoit en son coeur, voyant la vive image de sa vert[u] & sagesse en cest enfant, representant le hault coeur de son pere.⁵⁶

According to the French, Geruthe's memory of her late husband is rekindled by the representative image of his wisdom and virtue, as reborn in her son. Amleth then succeeds in helping Geruthe to mend the ravages of her conscience.

It is known that Belleforest read Nannini's anthology of military orations,⁵⁷ and so it is conceivable that he also consulted the Italian rendition of Amleto's speech, particularly since he intended to incorporate it into his *Histoires*. The case for Belleforest's familiarity

with Nannini's version of Saxo gains validity when one sees that the Frenchman's manipulation of the "memory" theme is almost certainly derived from Nannini's emphasis upon the perceptual function of human memory in sustaining moral vigilance and deep, constant love. But Belleforest undoubtedly lacks Nannini's terseness, and consequent suggestiveness, in articulating this idea. In fact, by enshrouding the "memory" motif in so much verbiage, Belleforest manages to diminish considerably the rhetorical impact of Nannini's subtly interwoven assertions: the reader is not compelled to arrest the flow of ideas so that he can study their implications. At the same time, although the Frenchman analyzes the Queen's change of heart upon hearing her son's vigorous series of reproaches, he does not work directly into Amleth's harangue a dramatic image or rhetorical structure that would show the hero autonomously defining the spiritual genealogy of Geruthe's transgressions.⁵⁸

Nannini's harangue does provide this kind of moral mimesis, if only evanescently. Shakespeare, forty years later, steadied and widened the focus.

In the closet scene itself, yet elsewhere throughout the play, the poet refined and deepened Nannini's moral penetration. When Hamlet resumes his "wringing" of his mother's heart, immediately after the murder of Polonius, he says, in answer to the Queen's question as to what she has done:

Such an act
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
And sets a blister there; makes marriage vows
As false as dicers' oaths

.
and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words. (III.iv.40-47)

It is significant that Hamlet's first allusion, when trying to dislodge his mother's complacency, is neither to her lasciviousness nor to her bestiality, but to her reversal of the moral order—indeed, to her pervasive denial of the reality of virtue, modesty, innocence. Only after Hamlet has established the nature of his mother's sin—her moral anarchy, her utter amorality—does he proceed to compare the

"counterfeit" to the picture of the dead King. Critics have often stressed the protagonist's sheer astonishment at his mother's dismal failure to distinguish, even at the sensual level, between the respective merits of her two husbands; hence, Hamlet's vexed and baffled outcry:

Look you now, what follows;
Here is your husband; like a mildew'd ear,
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,
And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes? (III.iv.63-67)

Gertrude's behavior, even if one concedes the failure of her judgment, seems completely inexplicable in aesthetic terms. Yet the Queen's amazing obtuseness, her "apoplexed" sense, can be traced to the quality of the mental space she now inhabits, a space without moral dimension, and without moral anxiety. Such a rejection of all past conditioning accounts for Gertrude's naïveté in the face of her son's bald accusations. While accepting the explanation that the Ghost's reappearance had prevented Hamlet from spelling out for his mother the details of her husband's murder, critics still wonder why Gertrude fails to comprehend the situation, why she assumes so offended an air.⁵⁹

Interpreting the Queen's behavior in the light of her inability to perceive moral problems, one sees that it is a self-willed amnesia which has blunted Gertrude's faculties, exercised as they are against the pressure of an unredeemable, blank "present." Hamlet's virulently graphic description of his mother's lovemaking—

In the rank sweat of an enseamed bed,
Stew'd in corruption, honeying . . .
Over the nasty sty,— (III.iv.92-94)

has been variously interpreted, over the years, as evidence of the young Prince's sexual jealousy, as an indication of Hamlet's unhealthy preoccupation with his mother, and as a mark of the poet's own disillusionment with the pains of sexual pleasure. I offer a different interpretation which does not, however, exclude any of the others.

Upon the physical fact of his mother's sexuality, Hamlet superimposes an abrasively negative moral judgment ("rank" sweat; "en-

seamed" bed, etc.): the physical is not allowed to retain any vestige of neutrality.⁶⁰ Hamlet's scabrous choice of words leaves one feeling that every physical act, by virtue of its commission, becomes morally repellent, and inescapably so. One could argue that all we have here is the reflection of the poet's (or hero's) own sick distaste. Nevertheless, by making the physical appear reprehensible, Hamlet may well be trying to arouse his mother into an awareness of all she has forgotten. Gertrude must stir because her route of escape from memory (and its attendant moral demands), the physical, the mindlessly venereal, has suddenly been turned, through the agency of Hamlet's rhetoric, into that from which she now wants to flee, moral perception, rational consent. The circle has closed round her, and only the return of memory can break it.

Shakespeare arranges the closet scene so that Hamlet first alludes, as we have seen, to his mother's anarchic behavior, then to her dead husband's physical grace and finally, to her "licentiousness," which he frames within the broader considerations of moral response. It is quite possibly more than coincidental that Nannini takes care to create a syntactic and stylistic structure which identifies the Queen's failure of memory as the primary cause of her bestial disintegration. Hamlet's mind immediately springs, not to his mother's lust nor even to Claudius's ugliness, but, rather, to that which Nannini also judged to be the source of Gertrude's otherwise incomprehensible behavior, that is, her flagrant defiance of real values, as embodied in her moral amnesia. Furthermore, the Prince's rhapsody upon his father's godly looks serves to accentuate, from an affirmative perspective, that which, through its sweeping negativity, startles and rouses in the "enseamed bed" harangue. Gertrude has surrendered her capacity to see the moral beauty of the whole man (*mens sana in corpore sano*); she must thus be shown, however mercilessly, the awful converse of that principle: the moral stigma attached to all by which the evil man expresses himself, physically as well as spiritually.

One recalls that Nannini, rather than Belleforest, distinguished, within the context of Amleto's speech, the cause of Gertrude's sinfulness from the effect. In so doing, Nannini created, in embryonic form, a ratiocinative, sophisticated hero who, unlike Belleforest's Amleth, actually recognizes, and articulates for his mother, the exact nature of her spiritual compromise. Does not Shakespeare allow his

Hamlet to explore Gertrude's consciousness—by testing and probing, to evoke the desired responses, which could only be elicited if Hamlet's basic hypothesis concerning his mother's psychic dysfunction were borne out in his remorseless attack? The full dramatization of this moral inquiry and its findings is, of course, Shakespeare's inimitable achievement.

Shakespeare's use of the "memory" motif is not restricted to the closet scene. The player-king refers to the function of memory in III.ii.176ff. ("purpose is but the slave to memory"); Hamlet depends on its tenacity to preserve his vengeful spirit, in I.v.95ff.; again, in I.ii.140ff., the hero's recourse to it causes him grave consternation. In all three instances—as the player-king complains⁶¹ of the pragmatic, mercurial nature of a memory subservient to the exigencies of Fortune, as Hamlet wills all other thoughts save vengeance from the "book" of his mind, as the hero winces in anguish when recalling his father's tenderness toward Gertrude—the concept of memory is firmly allied to an ethical imperative. In the first instance, the actor laments the lack of constancy of affection, fidelity, and fortitude in human relationships; in the second, Hamlet treats memory as a reference point, as a means of focussing upon the moral responsibility thrust toward him; in the third, the Prince remembers his parents' happiness in order to evaluate more confidently the moral and political unease created by Claudius's ascent to power (one emotional environment is compared to another).

Shakespeare obviously exploited the theme of "memoria" qua moral incentive: his protagonist, like Nannini's Amleto, was keenly aware of memory's binding—and loosing—force. Neither in the First Quarto nor in *Brudernord* do the allusions to memory exhibit such metaphysical cogency.⁶² In a play as deeply concerned with the loss of all moral and familial ties, and with the range of terrible uncertainties surrounding the past, as is *Hamlet*, could not Nannini's pithy insight have contributed to the flowering of a dramatic theme which, in the nobility of its moral appeal throughout the play, subsumes and transcends all the solipsistic vicissitudes of human consciousness characterizing the work?

One also notices in the Nannini text that the hero's first three sentences are all interrogative: Amleto literally asks his mother a series of questions which, although seeming simply rhetorical at

first, actually carry another ring as well. The rhythm of the Italian and the general tone of the words express an intense exasperation made all the more intolerable by a violent compulsion to accuse, ruthlessly. Indeed, the note struck is a condescending one, as if the Queen were a reckless, intractable child who must be forced to stop breaking everyone's toys. Yet the very existence of the interrogative series leaves one with the impression that Amleto has allowed Gertruda a moment of qualification or amelioration. Underlying the questions Hamlet fires at his mother in the closet scene is the gnawing doubt as to whether she is so blind and naïve that suspicion and cynicism are totally foreign to her, even amidst the court's hypocrisy. Such a mixture of keen inquisitiveness, sad filial bewilderment, and sour disgust at his mother's remarriage marks Hamlet's behavior toward Gertrude throughout the entire play. The three responses may vary proportionately from scene to scene, but their cumulative presence is always felt. Shakespeare may well have appreciated Nannini's touch of impatient disbelief in his hero's reaction: Hamlet, like Amleto, seems emotionally convulsed whenever he reflects upon his mother's actions.

More important is the fact that Hamlet's celebrated disquisition upon that "monster custom" as a possible explanation for his mother's unintelligible behavior could have been derived in part from the poet's discernment of the note of mitigation in the Italian oration, coupled with the broader implications of "memoria" which Nannini suggests. As her son sees it, Gertrude is culpable, but her awareness of that culpability, he implies, is vitiated by her continual re-creation of her original sin: the dreadful has been transmuted into the mundane because Gertrude has suppressed the "memory" which can call her act by its proper name; a pseudo-memory now occupies the vacuum.⁶³

The ambivalence of thought and feeling which characterizes all of Hamlet's dealings with his mother, the profound tension between the hero's love for Gertrude and his hatred of her deed, emerges, to a certain extent, in Nannini's "argomento," the explanatory preface to the closet scene. When Amleto finds himself sequestered with his mother, says Nannini, he is "bramando di mostrar alla madre, che non era pazzo," that is, *yearning* to show his mother that he is not mad, that he is purposeful. Neither Saxo nor Belleforest uses an ex-

pression which conveys such poignant intensity of desire. In Saxo, the counselor anticipates, with great confidence, Amlethus's instinctive and immediate intimacy with his mother (which should prove his undoing):

Futurum enim, ut, si quid filius saperet, apud maternas aures eloqui non dubitaret, nec se genitricis fidei credere pertimesceret.⁶⁴

Belleforest gives priority, not to Amleth's wish to win his mother's confidence, but to the hero's apprehension concerning his own safety should he be overheard:

Lequel comme il estoit fin & cauteleux, si tost qu'il fut dedans la chambre, se douta de quelque trahison et surprisne: & que s'il parloit à sa mere de quelque cas serieux, il ne fust entendu, continuant en ses façons de faire, folles et niaises.⁶⁵

In *Hamlet* III.ii.376, the protagonist tempers his mounting fury before the closet scene with the words "O heart, lose not thy nature." This line occurs neither in the First Quarto nor in *Brudermord*. Its omission should not be surprising. Hamlet's self-admonition at this point in the play functions as a microcosmic image of all the contradictory emotional tugs which the hero experiences in his attempts to communicate with Gertrude. Nannini's turn of phrase also mirrors the tension between Amleto's impulses of filial affection ("bramando di mostrar") and the anguish generated by that which circumstance—his mother's remarriage to a murderer—had forced Amleto to do ("che non era pazzo"). Indeed, the Italian "bramando" carries with it a sense of emotional turbidity, an opacity of response which neither the difficulty of the Latin nor the effusiveness of the French manages to project.

That Shakespeare may have appreciated the utility of Nannini's psychological insight is suggested by another peculiarity in the closet scene. Despite the fact that Hamlet takes great pains to explain with gentleness and dignity how the Queen might liberate herself from the habit of sleeping with Claudius, when the Queen then asks "what shall I do," Hamlet unleashes a searing torrent of mockery, urging his mother to "let the bloat King tempt you again to bed" (III.iv.18off.). This violently abrupt change of mood, in which Hamlet attacks his mother's integrity and credibility, is paralleled in Nannini's version by the statement that Amleto "cominciò a dubi-

tare" (in this case, the presence of a spy—but does he suspect his mother as accomplice?) almost simultaneously with experiencing the return of filial ardor ("bramando"). Nannini's juxtaposition, in his "argomento," of filial solicitude and politic suspicion creates precisely that feeling of acute moral dilemma which Shakespeare sought to produce in dramatizing Hamlet's quandary at Elsinore.

The best argument for Shakespeare's knowledge of Nannini can be found in the poet's own work. Shakespeare usually strove for provocative economy of statement, richness of suggestion and syntax, simplicity and vigor of rhythm. But despite the poet's indebtedness to Belleforest, the French writer rarely displays in his prose an aesthetically coherent combination of all these qualities. His major handicaps, rampant verbosity and moralistic observation, prevent him from harboring within a single statement the shifting yet inviolable presence of other, modifying statements. Nannini can attain such a conceptual maturity in his style, even if only on occasion. The Dominican ventures further than does Saxo in probing Amleto's psyche; and, while he does not actually surpass Belleforest in moral amplitude,⁶⁶ his moral emphasis on "memory" argues for a greater philosophical subtlety, a sharper intellectual sensibility than that which Belleforest possesses. Remigio Nannini is credited with editing the works of Thomas Aquinas,⁶⁷ a theologian, one remembers, who laid masterful stress upon the essential importance of reason in the conduct of human affairs: Aquinas would surely have appreciated Nannini's affirmation of the principle that the human personality remains rationally accessible.

Moreover, Nannini's oration, unlike that of Belleforest, exhibits genuine conversational verisimilitude: the pace of Amleto's speech is carefully matched to the implications of his remarks. One senses how deliberate and self-conscious is the pulse behind Amleto's assertions of intent:

Et io non senza proposito mi son *finto pazzo*, e mi *ingo* ancora, però, ch'io *dubito*, e ho *dubitato* sempre che colui che *amazzò* crudelmente il mio fratello, non *amazzasse* anche me. (italics mine)

Ogni luogo, & ogni tempo non è sempre buono a far ciò che l'uomo vuole, e . . . bisogna usare *tutta* l'industria, e *tutta* la forza dell'ingegno. (italics mine)

Amleto is here weighing his words—at times, portentously. In fact, his emotional violence, like that of Shakespeare's hero, manifests, in its most severe eruptions, a tendency toward histrionic self-indulgence. Belleforest's Amleth rails as well, but his hero becomes so enmeshed in his web of words that his wilfulness and steely calculation fail to escape entanglement.

Shakespeare would have detected in Nannini's Amleto an emotional fervor, a lucidity of consciousness, both of which serve to animate the speaking voice and render it memorably individual. The Italian's prose is more dramatic, in its inflections, than that of either Saxo or Belleforest. Even when Amleto says,

Nondimeno io ho havuto sempre in animo di vendicar la morte di mio padre, e non fo altro, che aspettar l'occasione, e la commodità del tempo, his declaration—that he does nothing else but await the proper occasion and convenient time—conveys, in the Italian, a votive singleness of purpose, an epistemological commitment, as vehement and resolute as Hamlet's outcry in I.v.95ff.:

Remember thee?

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember thee?
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All sows of books, all forms, all pressures past.

Given Shakespeare's preoccupation in *Hamlet* with the question of what to do with a morally sensitive hero who keeps stumbling over his own complexity precisely because his capacity for single-mindedness comes from the same source, it is far from improbable that Nannini's Amleto, who also seems to be a fiercely militant and a contemplative figure, did indeed tempt the English dramatist into the “pale cast of thought.”

Nannini's version of the closet scene also differs from that of Belleforest in its exclusion, from the reference to Gertruda's obliteration of memory, of all mention of her first husband's valor and prowess. Only the memory of his father's love and affection is insisted upon by Amleto. Did Nannini's Christian bias here serve to enhance Shakespeare's awareness of the moral problems attendant upon revenge drama? In *Hamlet*, at least, love is not enough. Never-

theless, Nannini's "piccolo adornamento" to the text of the story inherited from Saxo assumed, perhaps, in the mind of Shakespeare, a "gran vagghezza" which was, for the dramatist's purpose, more than sufficient.

As one recalls the details of Nannini's "adornamenti"—his introduction of the conditional regret as to the identity of the man Amleto murders; his original interpretation of the moral forces inhering in memory; his intimation that Anileto "yearns" to confide in Gertrude; his treatment of Amleto's madness and of Gertrude's sin—one sees that it is these very ideas which Shakespeare casts into extraordinary relief, and molds into a powerful dramatic unity, in the Second Quarto. One also remembers Fredson Bowers's remark⁶⁸ that it is the killing of Polonius *in the closet scene* which forms the crux of sin and expiation in *Hamlet*. One is tempted to wonder: if Shakespeare did indeed read the Dominican friar's version of the closet scene, did he do so before he composed a first version of the play (which, as mirrored in Q1, might already have shown elementary traces of Nannini's own embellishments), or did Shakespeare's possible discovery of Nannini after he composed the first version serve to strengthen and nurture the dramatist's own intuitions about the ways in which Hamlet, both the play and the character, could be made more "memorable"? Further study of Nannini might provide an answer, or if not that, a larger puzzle to investigate.

NOTES

1. See J. M. Robertson, *The Problem of "Hamlet"* (London, 1919); E. E. Stoll, *Hamlet: An Historical and Comparative Study* (Research Publications of the University of Minnesota, Vol. viii, No. 5, September 1919); C. M. Lewis, *The Genesis of Hamlet* (New York, 1907); Israel Gollancz, *The Sources of Hamlet* (London, 1926); Kemp Malone, *The Literary History of Hamlet. I. The Early Tradition* (Heidelberg, 1923); and G. I. Duthie, *The 'Bad' Quarto of Hamlet* (Cambridge, 1941).
2. Bernard Quaritch in catalogue 957 (1976), p. 36, called attention to this apparently unrecognized version of the Hamlet story. I am indebted to Professor Roland Mushat Frye for bringing this remarkable discovery to my attention.
3. A fuller version of the title is: *Orationi in materia civile, e criminale, tratte da gli historici Greci, e Latini, antichi, e moderni, raccolte, e tradotte . . . con gli Argomenti a ciascuna Oratione . . . e con gli Effetti che seguirono da dette Orationi*. In Vinegia

appresso Gabriel Giolito de' Ferrari. M D LXI. The historians from whom Nannini derived his material include Livy, Sallust, Quintus Curtius, Dion Cassius, Leonardo Arctino, and Galeazzo Capella.

4. See Mario Emilio Cosenza, *Biographical and Bibliographical Dictionary of the Italian Humanists and of the World of Classical Scholarship in Italy: 1300–1800* (Boston, 1962), iv, 3023–3024; and v, 1520–1521.
5. Giulio Negri, *Istoria degli scrittori Fiorentini* (Ferrara, 1722), p. 481.
6. Girolamo Ghilini, *Teatro d'huomini letterati* (Venice, 1647), I, 204.
7. Saxo Grammaticus, *Historia Danica*, Vol. I, pars prior, ed. Petrus Erasmus Müller (Havniae, 1839), pp. 143–144.
8. Especially worthy of attention are Geoffrey Bullough's introduction to *Hamlet* in *Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare* (London, 1957–), vii, 10ff.; Robert Adger Law, "Belleforest, Shakespeare, and Kyd," in *Joseph Quincy Adams Memorial Studies*, ed. J. G. McManaway et al. (Washington, D.C., 1948), pp. 279–294; G. Blakemore Evans, "Belleforest and the Gonzago Story," *Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, 24 (1949), 280–282; and A. P. Stabler, "Melancholy, Ambition, and Revenge in Belleforest's Hamlet," *PMLA*, 81 (1966), 207–213. For an entertaining discussion of the *Ur-Hamlet*, see J. C. Allen, "Thomas Kyd's 'Hamlet,'" *Westminster Review*, 170 (1908), 551–564 and 684–692.
9. François Belleforest, *Histoires tragiques . . . Le tout faict, illustré, & mis en ordre, par François de Belleforest Comingeois*, v (Lyons [1576?]). The title has been taken from Volume v.
10. Virgil Whitaker deals with this hypothesis in his appendix to *Shakespeare's Use of Learning* (San Marino, 1953), entitled "The Source of Hamlet."
11. Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources*, vii, 20ff.; and Whitaker, loc. cit.
12. Perhaps the best sources for evidence here are T. W. Baldwin, *William Shakespeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greeke*, 2 vols. (Urbana, 1944); and Kenneth Muir's introduction to his *Shakespeare's Sources, I, Comedies and Tragedies* (London, 1961).
13. Mario Praz, "Shakespeare's Italy," *Shakespeare Survey*, 7 (1954), 95–106.
14. R. Warwick Bond, *Studia otiosa: Some Attempts in Criticism* (London, 1938).
15. A. P. Stabler, "The Sources of *Hamlet*: Some Corrections of the Record," *Research Studies* (Washington State University), 32 (1964), 207–216.
16. Bullough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources*, vii, 15.
17. Muir, *Shakespeare's Sources*, pp. 3–4.
18. Hereward T. Price, "Shakespeare's Classical Scholarship," *RES*, 9 (1958), 54–55.
19. Ibid., p. 54.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., p. 55.
22. Girolamo Ghilini, *Teatro d'huomini letterati*, I, 204.
23. Praz, "Shakespeare's Italy," pp. 104f.
24. Ibid., p. 105.
25. Petrus Justinianus, *Le historie Venetiane . . . di nuovo rivedute . . . nelle quali si*

contengono tutte le cose notabili, occorse dal principio della fondatione della Città sino all'anno 1575 . . . in lingua volgare tradotte (parte dal . . . M. G. Horologgi; e'l resto . . . dal R. P. M. Remigio Fiorentino) (Venetia, 1576).

26. See Frances A. Yates, *John Florio: The Life of an Italian in Shakespeare's England* (Cambridge, 1934), esp. chap. i. Florio was born in London, but his father had fled there from Italy because of his Waldensian leanings. Yates also points out that Florio was thoroughly familiar with all the "stock Renaissance favorites, Petrarcha, Aretino, Boccaccio, Bandello, Machiavelli, Tasso, Ariosto . . ." (p. 266). We know, from Cosenza and Negri, that Nannini translated Petrarch's Latin poems and Ovid's Epistles.

27. Yates, *Florio*, esp. chap. xi, "At Court."

28. There seems to be a potential treasury for research in both books. In *Orationi in materia civile* there are speeches by and against Coriolanus (pp. 168-197), by Marcus Antonius (pp. 13-21 and 249-259), and by Junius Brutus (pp. 136-143). In *Orationi militari* there are certain duplications of the former, along with other orations by Coriolanus (pp. 241-244), Marcus Brutus (pp. 312-314), the Romans to Coriolanus (pp. 245ff.), Julius Caesar, Cassius, Pompey, et al.

29. Remigio Nannini, *Civill Considerations upon Many and Sundrie Histories . . . Containing Sundry Rules and Precepts for Princes, Common-wealths. . . . Translated from the Italian into French by Gabriel Chappuys and from French into English by W. T. (London, 1601).*

30. One of Nannini's most obvious theological allusions appears on p. 169 of *Civill Considerations*: "I know, that the nature and condition of malefactors is such, that they thinke they shall never be discovered. . . . These men, either beleieve not, or they know not, what is said by the authoritie of Jesus Christ . . . that there is nothing so hidden, but it shall bee revealed, neither any thing so secret, but it shal be knowne: and that oftentimes, the iniquitie falleth upon his head who hath committed it."

31. For a concise discussion of the ferment caused by *The Prince*, see Mario Praz, "The Politic Brain: Machiavelli and the Elizabethans," in *The Flaming Heart* (Gloucester, Mass., 1966). There is relevant material in Ruth L. Anderson, "Kingship in Renaissance Drama," *SP*, 41 (1944), 136-155; W. A. Armstrong, "The Elizabethan Conception of the Tyrant," *RES*, 22 (1946), 161-181; and W. A. Armstrong, "The Influence of Seneca and Machiavelli on the Elizabethan Tyrant," *RES*, 24 (1948), 19-35.

32. Like Machiavelli, Claudius recognizes the dangers of eliminating someone who is loved by the people (*Hamlet* iv. vii. 16-21; this and following citations of *Hamlet* are taken from *A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare: Hamlet*, ed. Horace Howard Furness [Philadelphia, 1877, 1905], Vol. i). As Machiavelli advised, he tries to divert his subjects from internal difficulties by encouraging revels, carousing, and preparations for battle. John C. McCloskey, "Fear of the People as a Minor Motive in Shakspeare," *Shakespeare Association Bulletin*, 17 (1942), 67-72, provides a convenient reference for Shakespeare's use of a standard Machiavellian prescription. Note also Morris Weitz, *Hamlet and the Philosophy of Literary Criticism* (Chicago, 1966), esp. pp. 70ff.

33. Yates, *Florio*, esp. pp. 302–303.
34. Shakespeare may have been drawn to treatises dealing with the moral dimensions of political acts, especially since the revenge code and the retributive ethos in drama came under heavy fire even during his lifetime. Cf. Fredson Bowers's discussion of this thorny problem in *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587–1642* (Princeton, 1940).
35. *Civill Considerations* (p. 19) has this: “Saxon the Grammarien in the I. book of his histories of Denmark, knowing how dangerous the desire of spoyle is, through the hindrance and let that it giveth to a manifest victorie, bringeth in the King of England . . . using these words to his souldiers, which hee persuadeth to fight against the King of Denmarke . . . Doe not wearie and encomber with the burthen of riches, those hands which are ordained to fight, and know that you ought to obtaine the victorie before the spoyle . . . vertue is of more worth than mettall. . . . This counsell was ill followed by the English souldiers. . . .”
36. Nannini maintained a considerable interest in political writings, and in fact annotated an edition of Guicciardini's history of Italy: *La Historia d'Italia . . . Con l'aggiunta de' summarij . . . & con le annotationi . . . fatte dal . . . padre Remigio Fiorentino . . .* (Venetia, 1563). Moreover, Nannini refers quite extensively to Guicciardini's other works as well in *Civill Considerations*. More than Belleforest, Nannini seems to have made himself familiar with contemporary political debates.
37. *Hamlet* III. iv. 31–32.
38. Bulloough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources*, VII, 65.
39. Belleforest does mention that Fengon has gone hunting in the forest, but Amleth does not necessarily believe that the King returns hours later.
40. Jackson G. Barry, “Shakespeare's ‘Deceptive Cadence’: A Study in the Structure of *Hamlet*,” *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 24 (1973), 117–127.
41. Ibid., p. 121.
42. Ibid., p. 122.
43. All references to the First Quarto are taken from Furness's *Variorum Hamlet* (Philadelphia, 1877, 1905), Vol. II. Lines 371–375 in Q2 III.ii are not to be found in the analogous section of Q1, lines 1405–1410. The unmitigatedly savage nature of Hamlet's mood at that point in Q2 has no parallel, in either intensity or ferocity, in Q1, where Hamlet simply does not seethe with murderous thoughts before entering his mother's chamber; hence, there is no opportunity for a “deceptive cadence.” The appearance of the statement “I tooke thee for thy better” in Q1, line 1459, may be important. Its inclusion could imply that (a) someone lifted it from Kyd's *Ur-Hamlet* (I argue further on against the likelihood of this derivation); or (b) Shakespeare may actually have begun to glimpse, in a first version of the play, various structural possibilities of the closet scene which could only be realized in full if Hamlet were anticipating bloodshed when preparing to confront his mother. Might Shakespeare have noted Nannini's allusion to the “wrong corpse” while writing (or beginning to write) the first version of *Hamlet* (of which Q1 may be an abridge-

ment)—and then, after inserting that allusion rather literally into the first draft, worked out in Q2 a way for the “regret” to serve as the culmination of an entire structural and emotional process?

44. Discussed by G. I. Duthie, *The ‘Bad’ Quarto of Hamlet*.
45. Whitaker, *Shakespeare’s Use of Learning*, Appendix.
46. Saxo Grammaticus, *Historia Danica*, p. 144.
47. Belleforest, v, 211.
48. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “hectic.”
49. Saxo, loc. cit.
50. Belleforest, v, 207.
51. Bulloough, *Narrative and Dramatic Sources*, vii, 11–12, 95 note 6. It should be observed, however, that Belleforest’s preoccupation with Geruthe’s incestuous behavior may be derived, in part, from Nannini whose Amleto twice uses the expression “ogn’hor[a]” (“every hour”) when referring to his mother’s sexual acts; the impression Nannini creates is one of rapacious yet mechanical compulsion (“stewed in corruption”? “enseamed bed”?).
52. Saxo, loc. cit.
53. Belleforest, v, 207–208.
54. Ibid., p. 207.
55. Ibid., pp. 204–205.
56. Ibid., p. 212.
57. From the dedicatory preface to Belleforest’s *Harengues militaires* (Paris, 1572) in which Belleforest specifically acknowledges his debt to the Italian’s skill.
58. Belleforest’s Amleth points simply and bluntly to Geruthe’s lasciviousness as the cause of all succeeding tribulations. His mode of thinking seems more linear, more dogmatic, than that of Nannini’s Amleto. In addition, Amleto’s focus on his father’s love embraces both the spiritual and the physical; its centrality in the harangue lends a touch of warmly individual humanity to the figure of the dead man, transcending the anonymous epic grandeur of Belleforest’s haughty Horvendille who despoils Norway of all her riches for his wife’s sake (Belleforest, v, 208). Was Shakespeare thinking of Nannini’s chaste, poignant remark when he wrote of the domestic intimacy of Hamlet’s parents: “... so loving to my mother / That he might not beteem the winds of heaven / Visit her face too roughly” (i.ii.140–142)?
59. Note Kenneth Muir’s discussion of Gertrude’s reaction to Hamlet’s accusations in *Shakespeare: Hamlet* (New York, 1963).
60. In the First Quarto, lines 1492ff., Hamlet’s reference to his mother’s sexual pleasure is not fraught with graphically represented, moral revulsion as is the case in Q2.
61. Shakespeare may have thought of Hamlet himself as having composed the player-king’s speech on the ephemerality of human memory. See Furness’s annotations in the Variorum *Hamlet* 1, 247–251.
62. The allusions to memory in Q1 seem less coherently organized, thematically more casual, than they do in Q2. The Duke of the “play” does not, in lines 1292–1297, refer specifically to memory; in lines 535ff., after the ghost of his

father departs, Hamlet cries out “remember thee?” only once (as opposed to twice, emphatically, in Q2 I.v.95 and 97), and Hamlet fails altogether to personify memory as an allegorical “seat” in his own brain (Q2 I.v.96); finally, in his first soliloquy, lines 195–215, the Prince does not ask himself the rhetorical question “must I remember?” (Q2 I.ii.143) when pondering his mother’s former loving dependence on old Hamlet.

63. In the First Quarto, Hamlet does not make use of the expression “monster custom” when he suggests that his mother “forbear the adulterous bed to night” (lines 1539ff.). It is the case that Saxo refers to the “habit of virtue” (“virtutis habitum,” Saxo, p. 144); but Nannini’s emphasis on the failure of memory, along with his description of the Queen’s deed as “grave peccato,” might have coalesced in Shakespeare’s mind as something approximating or prefiguring “habits devil” (Q2 III.iv.162); the reverse of self-conscious discipline and perseverance is implied.
64. Saxo, p. 143.
65. Belleforest, v, 203–204.
66. A. P. Stabler, “Melancholy, Ambition, and Revenge in Belleforest’s Hamlet,” *PMLA*, 81 (1966), esp. pp. 212f.
67. Giulio Negri’s bibliography of Nannini lists the title of the work thus: *Divi Thomae Aquinatis in Libros Ethicorum Aristotelis ad Nicomacum expositionem, & interpretationem ex triplici textu Joannis Argirofilii, & Joannis Bernardi Feliciani Veneti, ad vetustiorem exemplariorum normam fideliter restituit, & quam diligentissime recognovit, atque in lucem edidit Venetiis apud Junctas in fol. 1563.*
68. Fredson Bowers, “Hamlet as Minister and Scourge,” *PMLA*, 70 (1955), 740–749, esp. 747.

“Merry Passages and Jeasts” and Sir Nicholas L’Estrange

H. F. LIPPINCOTT*

THE manuscript in the British Library titled “Merry Passages and Jeasts” (Harley 6395) is apparently the only original, unexpurgated collection of jests in English, published or unpublished, which survives from the middle seventeenth century or earlier. Until my recent edition,¹ the MS. was available in print only in a selection of the less bawdy parts—about a third of the total—in an old Camden Society volume, *Anecdotes and Traditions*.² But this selection did not begin to suggest the range and interest of the complete MS., which is an important social record for East Anglia during the Cromwell era and earlier.

My edition of the full MS. went to press before I was able to compare the MS. handwriting with any other signed and dated example of the same hand, although the anonymous MS. is usually attributed to Sir Nicholas L’Estrange. Now, through the courtesy of the Bodleian Library, I am able to reproduce a letter of Sir Nicholas (Plate I) in a hand identical to the principal one in the MS.³ This letter allows us to confirm the identity of Sir Nicholas as the compiler of the MS., an identification first advanced on the basis of internal, genealogical evidence by J. G. Nichols in 1839.⁴ For comparison, the British Library Board has permitted reproduction of folio two of the MS. (Plate II). Pamela Willetts, Deputy Keeper of the Library, who has studied the handwriting of the MS. in connection with Sir Nicholas’s music MSS., concurs privately with my view that the letter and the MS. were written by the same hand.⁵ The attribution of the MS. to Sir Nicholas has never been questioned, but it is good to have the matter settled for certain.

Sir Nicholas L’Estrange, Bart. (1603–55), of Hunstanton, Norfolk, was son of the Royalist Sir Hamon L’Estrange (1583–1654) and elder brother of Sir Roger L’Estrange, the well-known Restoration pamphleteer and Licencier of the Press.⁶ Sir Hamon, the father, was

* Air University, Alabama.

knighted in 1603/4; and as one of the principal men in the shire, he served as Sheriff of Norfolk, 1608–09, and Member of Parliament from Castle Rising, a decayed borough town near present-day Sandringham. Apparently a man of great vigor, in 1643 at sixty years of age, he directed the siege of King's Lynn in an attempt to hold the town for the Royalists, despite the fact that claims arising out of the siege were to impoverish the family for the rest of the century. His wife, Dame Alice, the compiler's mother, called "a woman of unconquerable spirit" by a modern county historian,⁷ kept a meticulous book of accounts and survived a year after her son Nicholas. Brother Roger inherited the energy of these two strong parents and subsequently made a name for himself outside the web of Norfolk family alliances, of which Sir Nicholas was presumably content simply to be a part.

About Sir Nicholas, little survives. He was overshadowed all his life by his father, whom he outlived by only two years. As the eldest son, Sir Nicholas may have been admitted at Gray's Inn, August 7, 1617, aged fourteen. Four years later he matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge, a year or two after most of his contemporaries, but there is no record of a university degree, and he was admitted at Lincoln's Inn, October 28, 1624. The number of jests which show familiarity with London and Cambridge life doubtless have some origin in these periods. On June 1, 1629, Sir Nicholas was created Baronet, and on August 25, 1630, he married a woman nine years his junior, Anne, daughter of Sir Edward Lewkenor of Denham, Suffolk. Presumably the two settled at the L'Estrange family estates at Hunstanton.

In September 1642, Sir Nicholas, his brothers, and his father failed to attend a meeting about the Norfolk militia, newly re-formed under control of the Parliament, and Sir Nicholas's letter of apology survives (MS. Tanner 69, folios 200–201; see the facsimile). From the first the L'Estranges were firm in their support of the King, and the letter reflects the tension between this support and the family's traditional ties with other Norfolk families. Writing from Hunstanton, September 14, 1642, Sir Nicholas addresses the letter "To his ever honored and Noble Kinsman Sir John Hobart Knight and Baronet these present at Norwich." A staunch Puritan, Sir John Hobart of Blickling, 1593–1647, eldest son in a distinguished legal family on

both sides, was a member of the Long Parliament and a party to the Solemn League and Covenant. His mother was Sir Nicholas's great aunt.

The letter reads as follows (I modernize the orthographic conventions):

Noble Sir,

I this last night received summons to attend you and other my Honord friends at Norwich on Thursday next, for a Consultation about the Peace and quiet of the Country [read: County], a worke most seasonable and worthy of every Mans care: but my unhappinesse is such, through a very ill furnisht and lame stable at this time, as I am necessitated to begge pardon for my failing, and your candide interpretation of this Apologie, and a communication of it to the rest of your grave Senate, with the lowest presentment of all humble service from

Your highly Honoring
Kinsman and Servant
Nicholas L'Estrange

[*post scriptum*] Sir the very infirme state of my Lady Lewkenor calld both for my wife and selfe, any time this fortnight; could we have found but leggs for the visitt.

[*marginal note*] My Wife presents her Service; and we both kisse the faire hand of your Noble Lady.

Sir Nicholas's polite excuses mask a definite refusal to associate himself with the Parliamentary cause. Consequently, because of the "candide interpretation" placed on the letter, Captain James Calthorpe was promoted to Colonel of the Militia in place of Sir Nicholas, and his foot company was given first to Sir Valentine Pell of Dersingham (a close friend) and later to John Coke of Holkham.⁸ If this was the John Coke mentioned in the jests, or his relation, this fact may explain Sir Nicholas's apparent dislike of him ("lowd vociferation and Bawling at all conferences," jest 552).

Prohibited by family support for the King from taking his rightful place in the county militia, Sir Nicholas lived out the conflict in relative neutrality and quiet. Although he is mentioned in warrants along with his father and brothers, there is no indication that he took the active part in the war they did. The copying of the MS. "Merry Passages and Jeasts" may have been one of his activities during this period, and if so, many of the jests take on a special irony from their

association with the civil conflict. The MS. cannot be dated precisely, but it was probably written down over a period of time, perhaps from the middle 1630's to the late 1640's or early 1650's. Sir Nicholas died at Hunstanton on July 24, 1655, aged fifty-two years. His grave-stone is still to be found in the chancel of St. Mary the Virgin, Hunstanton, next to the stone of his wife, who died July 15, 1663, aged fifty-one. A modern historian comments that Sir Nicholas is "a shadowy figure to posterity in comparison with his father and his brother Roger; but he certainly enjoyed life and savoured its humours to the full."⁹

If we know little of Sir Nicholas's biography or the exact dates of the MS., it is even more difficult to characterize Sir Nicholas himself from the jests. Only a few of the jests are first-person accounts, and even those he apparently signed with his own initials betray few personal characteristics. Perhaps the times in which he wrote dictated anonymity. With fourteen jests about James I, it is remarkable that there are no jests about Charles I and only one mention of "the queen," presumably Henrietta Maria (jest 517). If the MS. shows great discretion as a personal record and if Sir Nicholas himself is singularly self-effacing, the frankness of the language, by contrast, may be a form of psychological release. In any event, the modern reader is forced to deduce the man from his work.

By the standards of his day, Sir Nicholas was by no means poorly educated—his use of Latin is largely correct; the writing is never lax. Within the limits of the jest form, his writing exhibits the best features of the "plain" style, with emphasis on directness, clarity, and thought, at the expense of learned words, overly complete grammatical units, or, especially, rhetorical flourishes. So far as diction is concerned, the only difficulties come from country or local locations, hard to find in modern dictionaries—not from coinages from Greek and Latin, as, say, is the case with an East Anglian contemporary, Sir Thomas Browne. There are occasional classical references, but the MS. is not encumbered with bookish allusions—at least by comparison with the typical work of seventeenth-century polemics. And despite a clear ethical bias, there is no moralizing in the jests; they let their own points speak for themselves. The jests, of course, are not great art—nor is Sir Nicholas a great artist—but of their kind, the jests more than live up to a modest pretension, and the energy of

146⁷

Noble S^r.

I ther last night received sumow to attend
you and other my Honord friends at Norwich on thursday
next, for a consultation about the Peace and quiete of
the country, a worke most seasonable and worthy of
every mans care: but my unlappynesse is such, through
a very ill furnish'd and lame stable at this time,
as I am necessitated to begge pardon for my failing,
and your candide interpretation of this Apologie, and
a communication of it to the rest of your grue
Senate, with the lowest presentment of all humble
service from

the very infirme state
of my Lad: Lewk: called both
for my wife and selfe, any time
this fortnight; could we have
found but lyyg: for the visit.

Your highly Honoring

Kinsman and servant

Nicholas L'Estrange.

MS. TANNER 69, fol. 200.
1642.

PLATE I

MS. Tanner 69, fol. 200. L'Estrange's letter is inscribed "To his ever honored and Noble Kinsman Sir John Hobart Knight and Baronet these present at Norwich." On the historical background of the letter, see R. W. Ketton-Cremer, *Norfolk in the Civil War* (London, 1969), chap. viii, and esp. p. 151. Bodleian photograph reproduced by permission of the Curators of the Bodleian Library.

shake-shears was godfather
to one of Den: Johnsons children,
and after the christning, being in a
despit study, Johnson came to cheare him up,
and askt him why he was so melanchol^y, no
faith Den: (says he) not I, but I have beene
considering a great while what should be the fittest
gift for me to bestow upon my god-child, and I
have resolued at last; I gythe what, says he, g
faith Den: He ien give him a dozen good Latin
Spoonnes, and thou shalt translate them. 2.

12

There was one preacht in sumer, and stood two
hours; and one sayd at dinner that twas a
very good sermon, but haffent wold haue done
well cold.

13

Doctor Dame preaching a funerall sermon for
a Townsmans wife in Cambridge (that had bene a
very curst wench) tell his studetnes, that none
could judge of the losse of a wife till they had had
one; but because we brethren, whosoeuer loseth
such a wife as this was, will find it a greate
losse, a very shrewd losse.

14

wiggett the foole at a Norwich Assises, the Judge
being at dinner, and he sett at the lower end of
the Table, & some gentleman making a report to
the Judge of some seriuers businesse, after they
had spoke he rose up very soberly, and beseeche
their Lord: they wold haue him; they expecting
he could haue answered somthing to the point in
Rado bad the foole speake, who presently lett
a great fart, and sett downe againe to his meat.

PLATE II

MS. Harley 6395, fol. 2, "Merry Passages and Jeasts." L'Estrange's jest 11 is the well-known anecdote about Shakespeare and Jonson. S. Schoenbaum calls the anecdote "hearsay"; see his *William Shakespeare: A Documentary Life* (New York, 1975), pp. 206-207. British Library photograph reproduced by permission of the British Library Board.

their terse style exemplifies early modern English at its most un-selfconscious.

Apart from style, the most striking aspect of the MS. is the range and number of Sir Nicholas's acquaintances. The jests are attributed to some 115 different persons, in addition to others marked "Anon." or "Ignor." It seems that Sir Nicholas was able to extract a jest from almost anyone he met. And the range of allusion to seventeenth-century persons, presumably actual, is even greater, some 310 names, including some who are both tellers and subjects for the jests. The names in the MS. reflect the full social spectrum of seventeenth-century society, from monarchs and peers, through the leading country families, down to physicians, tavern keepers, servants, and even village and household fools. Sir Nicholas seems to have had frequent contact with the county clergy, both major and minor, but his own religious position was probably a moderate one. Nonconformist preachers are objects of ridicule, as we might expect, but also foolish Anglican scholars and divines. Sir Nicholas's Royalist sympathies are evident in the jests but not preoccupying, because his target is fools, no matter what their political persuasion.

That actual persons appear in the jests is unmistakable, but it is hard to verify that the jests also have historical truth. In the case of very well known persons, the jests must be largely apocryphal, for there is a long-standing practice in the published jestbooks of matching traditional jests with popular figures. Fictions of this sort were all too often perpetuated by finding their way into history books, as a glance at almost any seventeenth-century biographical note will show. G. E. Bentley has illustrated and debunked this process with special attention to Shakespeare, and the best-known jest from this collection, about Shakespeare as godfather to one of Ben Jonson's children (see the facsimile), is almost certainly fiction.¹⁰ Some of the jests about less well known persons may be based on actual anecdote (such as "my wife" and "my mother" talking in jest 261), but even with relatively unknown persons, we cannot be sure the jest is truthful. Despite an apparent veneer of verisimilitude, for instance, jest 125 about Climme Hoe is simple slander, for the jest in this very form goes back at least to Poggio's *Liber facetiarum* (ca. 1450), one of the standard continental collections which must have had some currency in England. (This jest does not appear in the Englished selections

from Poggio added at the end of Caxton's *Aesop*, ca. 1484). And many other jests must have had their origin in folktales (like jests 263 and 431), in fabliaux (like jests 107, 114, and 433), or in English jestbooks (like jest 32). To trace each of the 661 jests to its origin and to try to decide which is traditional and which is based on actual anecdote would be a tremendous undertaking without a systematic catalogue of all the published jests—a catalogue I am about to undertake. The value of the L'Estrange MS. is that it is a personal collection, with a kind of connoisseurship (if such a word is appropriate for jests) governing the selection. The most we can say is that these are the sorts of jests which circulated among the gentry in Norfolk in the mid-seventeenth century.

But if the jests probably lack historical truth, they often have a kind of psychological truth, much as today the press will report the current joke about a popular issue, not as straight news but as symptomatic of the climate of opinion. Everyone knows the joke is actually untrue, but there is a common agreement to suspend disbelief, and the joke gains currency because it speaks to the popular feeling. Jest 316, about King James befouling his breeches, for instance, may or may not have happened, but the King is so strongly characterized in the jest and attitudes about him are given such point that the question of historical truth becomes unimportant.¹¹ The teller of the joke participates in a world where he does not usually move, and at the same time, the joke itself is a kind of catharsis for pent-up feeling. The fool who unthinkingly has the Parliamentary troops cheer "God Save the King!" points up a bitter irony of the civil conflict (jest 136). And somehow it may be easier to put up with a Tobias Frere, "a pretended Zelote, but true Ringleader and Head of all factious and Schismatical spiritts in the Country [read: County]," if you make him the butt of a joke (jest 553). At the other end of the scale, the ethnic, sexist, or regional joke (in the L'Estrange MS., jests—often bawdy—about country clowns, the Roman church, whores, Welshmen, or Scots) reinforces the teller's sense of superiority, while giving an indirect outlet for his prejudices.

The bawdy in the MS., however, is not as shocking as the early Victorian editors would have had us believe. Although L'Estrange uses most conventional obscenities at least once, his more typical bawdy diction is inventive and comic circumlocution, such as "wim-

bles stoutly" (jest 114). But whatever the mode, L'Estrange's obscenity is usually not prurient or salacious, nor is the scatology obsessive. Although the jests are frank and earthy, L'Estrange's psychological orientation is clearly that of *l'homme moyen sensuel*. Moreover, the fact that the MS. is unexpurgated makes it a useful corrective to the published jestbooks, which are mostly unexceptional in their bawdy. Because of its overt obscenity, the MS. also tends to support the analysis of bawdy puns in non-obscene works, which has been one interest of post-Freudian scholarship.¹² See the additional explanatory notes at the end of this article.

Finally, the L'Estrange MS. is a good deal richer than just a collection of dirty jokes. The cumulative effect of the jests is almost novelistic in its picture of seventeenth-century East Anglia—city and town, university and market place, royalty and highwaymen. The MS. gives the flavor of actual conversation and allows us to see more clearly typical seventeenth-century attitudes toward women, the frankness of the relationship between the sexes, the closeness of family, village, and county loyalties, and the combination of sophistication and common sense of the English country gentry.

A subject index to the jests would include at least the following categories: animals, assizes and courts, the Bible, bawdy talk and euphemisms, churches, classical writers and allusions, major and minor clergy, clocks and watches, clothing, coins, cosmetics, country people, cuckolds, cutlery, dancing, diseases, drinking and drink, draining of fens, duels, falconry, food, fools, foreigners, games and gaming, judges and justices, kings, lawyers, Latin puns, madness, the military, medicine and physicians, music and musicians, practical jokes, public officials, ordinary occupations, peers and gentry, proverb lore, robbers, scholars, the sea, sermons, servants, swearing, table manners, tavern life, tobacco, the university, vices, and whores. Few other documents of the time have quite this range, and when the MS. is read together with a modern political and social history of Sir Nicholas's Norfolk,¹³ the MS. seems to supply the missing pieces.

These jests remind us again of Queenie Leavis's epitome of Renaissance popular culture:

The modern reader is at once struck by the body of traditional lore the people must have possessed. . . . The Elizabethan peasant or 'prentice inherited a folk-history of England, . . . a picturesque store of classical,

medieval, and biblical legends, . . . a series of traditional heroes of the people and their adventures, . . . and the broad but not always unsubtle humour of the jestbooks; and all this supported an idiom rich in proverbial wisdom.¹⁴

Even more than the London audience Mrs. Leavis analyzes, seventeenth-century East Anglia still had largely an aural culture, where a large part of social and business intercourse took place through listening: the sermon, courts of law, chatter at table, the disputation (academic or legal; serious or comic), the spoken rather than the written message. Sir Nicholas's MS.—candid and uninhibited as it is in both language and content—is one of the most accurate records we have of one aspect of this aural culture. Unlike the published jestbooks of the period which are expurgated and tainted with a distinctly literary tone, the MS. is almost conversational in its directness, and it more accurately reflects the typical wit and humor of the time. The publication of the complete MS. fills a gap in our attempt to recreate one characteristic tone of seventeenth-century popular communication.

NOTES

1. H. F. Lippincott, "Merry Passages and Feasts": *A Manuscript Jestbook of Sir Nicholas Le Strange (1603–1655)*, Elizabethan and Renaissance Studies 29, Salzburg Studies in English Literature (Salzburg, 1974). This article is a revision of parts of my introduction.
2. William J. Thoms, *Anecdotes and Traditions, Illustrative of Early English History and Literature, Derived from MS. Sources*, Camden Society, Ser. 1, No. 5 ([London, 1839]). A few of the jests are also found in John Wardroper, *Jest upon Jest: A Selection from the Jestbooks and Collections of Merry Tales Published from the Reign of Richard III to George III* (London, 1970), which includes a bibliography of sources.
3. I am indebted for knowledge of the letter (and for other details about the L'Estranges) to a reference in Robert W. Ketton-Cremer's *Norfolk in the Civil War: A Portrait of a Society in Conflict* (London, 1969), p. 151. The Nichols essay in Thoms and Ketton-Cremer's book are indispensable background to the MS. For an account of present-day life in nearby Suffolk which has a lot of correspondence to the world of Sir Nicholas's MS., see Ronald Blythe, *Akenfield: Portrait of an English Village* (London, 1969).
4. See his "Notices of Sir Nicholas Lestrange, Bart., and his Family Connections" in Thoms, pp. xi–xxviii. The compiler of the MS. speaks of his son "Nickolas," his "brother Roger," his "sister Elizabeth," his daughter "An: L'Estr:," and "Sir Nicholas Strange his time" (his grandfather). These names are all found in the L'Estrange pedigree. See, for instance, G. H. Dashwood, W. E. G. L. Bul-

wer, et al., *The Visitation of Norfolk in the Year 1563* (Norwich, 1878), 1, 65ff.

5. Miss Willetts has kindly called attention to the following studies of Sir Nicholas's music MSS.: her own article in the *British Museum Quarterly*, 29 (1965); Jane T. Johnson's article in the *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 20 (1967) 197–208; and Andrew Ashbee's Ph.D. thesis (London University, 1966), along with Dr. Ashbee's articles on John Jenkins in the *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 96 (1969–70), 29–42, and in the *Musica Britannica* series.

6. The family name is variously spelled Strange, L'Estrange, Lestrange, and Le Strange (the form I used in my edition). Now, on the basis of the letter, I would prefer the "L'Estrange" of Sir Nicholas's signature (and the form used in the DNB).

7. Ketton-Cremer, p. 217.

8. Ibid., p. 154.

9. Ketton-Cremer, *A Norfolk Gallery* (London, 1948), p. 65.

10. With orthographic conventions modernized, the jest reads as follows: "Shakespeare was Godfather to one of Ben: Johnsons children, and after the christning, being in a deepe study, Johnson came to cheere him up, and askt him why he was so Melancholy? no faith Ben: (sayes he) not I, but I have beene considering a great while what should be the fittest gift for me to bestow upon my God-child, and I have resol'vd at last; I pr'ythe what, sayes he? I faith Ben: I'le e'en give him a douzen good Lattin Spoones, and thou shalt translate them." The point is a somewhat feeble pun on *latten*, a mixed metal resembling brass, of which the spoons were apparently made. On the anecdotal tradition in Shakespeare biography, see Gerald Eades Bentley, *Shakespeare: A Biographical Handbook* (New Haven, 1961), pp. 6–21.

11. Jest 316: "King James being a hunting one time, and loth to light for the matter, shittet in his Breeches (according to his usuall manner) and so followed the chace, squeezing and charning so long, that it wrought out at the toppe of his collar; the Lord Holdernes (Ramsy) following of him, and smelling the businesse, your Highnesse is much polluted, sayes he; sure thou hast stood on thy Head, Man, and shitt thy selfe, how comes it out at thy Cragge else? my Lerds, see our Salaman, is this the Salaman yea talke on? if ever old Salaman in all his Reyaltie, was a Rayde like ours, Ile be hangd" (orthographical conventions again modernized). A comparison between James I and King Solomon was apparently a commonplace. Thoms cites the sermon preached at James's funeral on May 7, 1625, by the Bishop of Lincoln, titled "Great Britain's Solomon!" (p. 26, note).

12. See, for instance, Thomas W. Ross, *Chaucer's Bawdy* (New York, 1972); E. A. M. Colman, *The Dramatic Use of Bawdy in Shakespeare* (London, 1974); Eric Partridge, *Shakespeare's Bawdy* (London, 1968); and for modern jests, Gershon Legman's two volumes of *Rationale of the Dirty Joke* (New York, 1968–1975).

13. Such as Ketton-Cremer's *Norfolk in the Civil War*. For the preceding century, see A. Hassell Smith, *County and Court: Government and Politics in Norfolk, 1558–1603* (Oxford, 1974).

14. Queenie Dorothy Leavis, *Fiction and the Reading Public* (London, 1932), p. 86.

Additional Explanatory Notes for L'Estrange's
"Merry Passages and Jeasts"

The following notes (by jest number) are largely based on annotation and queries supplied by Thomas W. Ross of Colorado College. Professor Ross's private comments are cited simply as "Ross," although almost every note is indebted to his close reading. Partridge's, Colman's, and Ross's *Bawdy*, all cited above, should be added to the edition's list of short titles. Shakespeare is cited from the one-volume edition, ed. Peter Alexander (London and Glasgow, 1951).

3. *wHole-sale*. Cf. jest 544.

64. *Veale*. For the "French tone and Dialect" read "stage foreign," for, of course, the *v/w* confusion in English is more typical of German or Dutch. Cf. *LLL* 5.2.247, and for a similar "foreign" confusion, see gloss to jest 653, below.

111. *dester*. ? *destrer*, *destrier* "horse." *OED* lists no uses contemporary with the MS. (although there are many quite earlier ones). The point is probably that the use here is dial. or arch.

curse. I.e., course; to take a course (*OED*, s.v. "course," *sb.*, 21; the spelling "curs" survives from the fifteenth century).

watts. Ross suggests *wad*, i.e., "excrete her hay."

112. *chenke*. Ross reads *chink* "money," as in *Rom.1.5.115*.

Swer't. Sword.

Dele of my Sol. "Devil [de'il] of my Soul"; cf. jests 202, 407, and 437.

cens't. [Still a puzzle.]

118. *pendents*. "Testicles" (*OED*, s.v. "pendant," 3a).

140. *Windy Stomacke*. Apples traditionally produced flatulence. Ross compares *2HIV* 5.3.3, where the specific to reduce flatulence is caraway seeds.

161. *Capers . . . Mutton*. Perhaps a glance at the cant term for prostitute; see Colman, p. 204, and cf. *TN* 1.3.113,114 for a similar juxtaposition of caper and mutton. Ross suggests that caper means "to perform an athletic and even artistic act of love."

172. *Monstrous*. Sic the MS., although *OED* does not show the spelling with an *o*. Ross interestingly compares *11 Esdras* v.8: ". . . menstrual women shall beare monsters" (Geneva Bible, 1581).

197. *Crura . . .* Quoted from Virgil's *Georgics* IV, 180–181. Virgil speaks of the honey smelling of perfumed thyme and then contrasts the old bees who are charged with guarding the town with the young bees, "their

tired legs packed with thyme" (James Rhoads's modern translation), who come laboring home. In the context of the jest, lawyers' wives lead the "sweetest lives" (1) because their husbands bring home a lot of money and (2) because their husbands have sweet thighs. Shakespeare seems to have Virgil in mind when he speaks of a bee's "waxen thighs" in *MND* 3.1.155 and *2HIV* 4.5.76, and thighs are obviously bawdy in Mercutio's speech at *Rom.* 2.1.19–20. Ross further suggests a sexual meaning for *crura* as 'shins' and compares jest 532.

200. The jest is the same as jest 35.

210. *Inter fecit*. Quibble on L. *interficio* 'to kill.'

234. *Sir reverence*. Cf. Shakespeare's use of this phrase as a mock excuse in *Err.* 3.2.90 and *Rom.* 1.4.42, and see Partridge. Zall notes privately that the jest is a version of *Howlglass*, jest 23 (1528; STC 10565).

246. *Key's*. I.e., the pronunciation of Caius (College).

254. *Konee*. On *coney* "pudendum," see Ross's *Bawdy*, s.v. "queynte," although the use is not found in Shakespeare; cf. jests 345, 365, 386, and 435.

256. *Breaches . . . Breeches*. Ross notes that the words are not homophones; cf. jest 64 and Kökeritz, *Shakespeare's Pronunciation*, pp. 190–209.

257. *Bables*. On the fool's bauble, cf. *Rom.* 2.4.87–89; Partridge's *Dictionary* also glosses *baubles* as "testicles," which seems to be the meaning here.

293. *Greene Goose*. A fool or simpleton (*OED*, s.v. "Green goose," 2). Ross suggests the phrase may also be obscene on analogy with "Winchester goose," a venereal disease.

316. *a Rayde*. I.e., arrayed, with the obvious echo of Mat. vi.25.

331. *Ballock-Feast*. Partridge's *Dictionary* (Supplement, 1968) cites *ballocks*, "parson," from 1684. Thus the Scottish church-going is a "feast of parsons." On overlong sermons, compare jests 12, 243, 244, and 605.

345. *de Locke in Italian*. Quibble on It. *chiavare*: 1. unlock, turn the key; 2. have sexual intercourse. Cf. jest 430 and gloss, below.

346. *Itch*. For a similar bawdy meaning, Partridge compares *Tem.* 2.2.51.

356. *tewde*. Beat (*OED*, s.v. "tew," v.¹).

362. *Disease*. The meaning is probably closer to "discomfort" (*OED*, sb., 1), although there may also be a glance at the modern meaning, for the bride obviously has morning sickness.

swouned . . . for? ? "Fainted over."

Goose Rump. Ross plausibly suggests the bride is eating the literal cut of meat, the "Pope's nose"; perhaps some of the comedy comes from the expression's use as applied to a horse's rump (see *OED*).

364. *Snott-gall*. Nose (*OED*, s.v. "snot," 5, which is cited from 1685: "Three Kisses, four Busses, and five licks under the Snot gall").

371. *Tarre*. To incite (a dog) (*OED*, s.v. "Tar," v.2).

386. *Row one*. I.e., a raw "coney."

388. *this*. Misprint; MS. reads *his*.

430. *Securitie*. Ross comments: "Here I think the English compiler L'Estrange betrays his own lack of knowledge of Italian; the wife is afraid of the good strong or violent *chiavare* that her husband seems to be promising her." Cf. jest 345 and gloss.

439. *Gods-Good*. Quibble: 1. food viewed as the gift of God; 2. yeast (*OED*, s.v. "God's Good").

456. *Lights*. Quibble on "a light woman," one who is unchaste or promiscuous (*OED*, s.v. "light," a.1, 14b; ? not listed in this sense as a sb.).

458. *retorted*. The turned up Austrian lip familiar from portraits of the Hapsburgs.

464. *Die upward*. The suggestion seems to be that Sir Edmond should give Rob a portion of his inheritance *before* Sir Edmond's death; Sir Edmond ignores the suggestion and says that the fault is that the Bacons always "die upward," or late in life, and that Rob will have to wait until *after* Sir Edmond's death. Cf. *OED*, s.v. "upward," 8a: "to or into later life." There may also be a glance at a sexual meaning for die, but such a quibble seems improbable.

466. *Running*. Quibble: 1. hunted; 2. diseased (*OED*, s.v. "running," *ppl.a.*, 7a; 4). Cf. "case," jest 258.

Courses. Quibble: 1. the running after game, esp. hare with hounds; 2. catamenia or menses (*OED*, s.v. "Course," *sb.*, 7; 27). Ross calls the jest "particularly repellent."

470. *Opener*. Laxative (*OED*, 1b).

482. *wone*. Ross comments that the spelling reflects the dialectical pronunciation as opposed to the London form without the *w* sound.

486. *Jourdan*. Quibble: 1. Jordan River; 2. chamber pot.

487. *Old*. Habitual.

492. *Royall . . . Noble*. The same quibble as *RII* 5.5.68.

494. *Prune*. Associated with brothels or "stews."

508. *Sold Her?* ?I.e., sold her jointure; cf. jests 290 and 468. Ross emphasizes that a smock is an intimate undergarment.

513. *Flye-Blow*. Glances at *by-blow* "bastard."

515. *Trote*. "By my troth."

Tumme. Thumb.

516. *Fleaing*. I.e., de-fleaing.

520. *Familie of Love*. A religious sect which originated in Holland but which had many adherents in sixteenth-century England (*OED*, s.v. "family," 7).

521. *Greene and Yong*. ? Proper names.

532. *Shinnes*. Ross suspects a sexual meaning and compares *LLL* 3.1.65, and *jest* 197.

551. *Inde-pendent*. L. "hanging from there," with the obvious quibble.

555. *Greene*. Young, youthful, with a quibble on the name.

559. *Muddy*. Not clear or pure in color (*OED*, a., 4a).

complexion. In the modern sense of color and texture of skin (*OED*, sb., 4).

Thicke. Dark or cloudy, as weather (*OED*, a., 7). Ross suggests "phlegmatic," reading *complexion* as "humor," but the modern sense of complexion was also current and seems more applicable here. *OED* cites from 1639: "The child's colour or complexion (as we vulgarly term it)."

563. *Stand*. The usual quibble on the erect penis; cf. *jest* 142.

Prickē. Quibble: 1. mark of punctuation (period or comma); 2. penis.

573. *Sacraments*. In the sixteenth century, English Protestants reduced the number of sacraments from seven to two, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

576. *Duo-Bús*. I.e., buss "kiss." In the note, for *Dobus* read *Dnibus*.

583. *she*. It is possible that the first *she* (in the phrase "I have heard sayes she") should be emended to *he*, thus making a duologue. Otherwise there seems no reason for the second repetition of "sayes she," a repetition which is not Sir Nicholas's usual pattern.

venter. ? Venture or gamble, with the obvious quibble on *venter* "belly," for *OED* does not show *venter* as a vb. For *ventrem*, Ross suggests simply "belly."

Eye. The context lends support to Partridge's assertion of *eye* "pudendum" (on analogy with "eye of a needle"), although the use is apparently not in *OED*.

596. *Changed*. I.e., "high" or spoiled. *OED* says the use is dial. or colloq. (s.v. "change," v., 6c).

598. *Auricular Confession*. The legal phrase seems to be "auricular witness." Note the sudden comic insertion of a religious term in a series of bawdy legal quibbles. That auricular confession leads to sexual malfeasance was a commonplace even before the Reformation; cf. Poggio 232. Colman (p. 189) cites *HVIII* 1.4.15.

Case. Partridge explains the usual bawdy quibble on *case* "because

it sheathes a sword.” Here the quibble is extended to a case at law (cf. the Fr. *cas*, which Colman, p. 187, says had a similar meaning of ‘private parts’).

638. *greene sicknesse*. An anemic disease which most affects young girls about the age of puberty. Thus, by extension, as Partridge says, “a sign of a girl’s love-sickness, or of vague desire, for a man” (p. 123).

Coverd. In a sexual sense (*OED*, v.¹, 6), usually said of horses.

653. *Casse*. The Welshman’s association with cheese (instead of meat, which he could not afford) was proverbial; cf. jest 517. *Casse* may be “stage foreign” for ‘cheese’ on analogy with Ger. Käse.

bobby. Partridge’s *Dictionary* cites *bob*, “man, fellow,” from ca. 1700. Perhaps there is also a glance at the vb. *bob*, “to fool or joke” (*OED*).

Simms's Early Short Stories

MARY ANN WIMSATT*

IN the past few decades William Gilmore Simms's short fiction has attracted increasing scholarly attention. Older studies discuss its contents and bibliographical complexities, its contemporary commercial appeal, and its German sources or filiations, while a recent substantial essay describes its wide-ranging forms, subjects, settings, and purposes, suggesting new ways to view and classify them.¹ In general, however, serious students of the genre continue to overlook Simms's short pieces because they do not understand his contribution to this aspect of antebellum letters and because he published some narratives in obscure collections. The recently issued *Stories and Tales*, Volume Five of the Centennial Edition now in progress, may help remedy the situation by arousing new interest in his work in this vein. If so, it will aid our continuing reappraisal of his life and writing.

With regard to short stories this reappraisal will not, one hopes, focus only on Simms's mature pieces, which have already drawn some critical acclaim. Also important is an increase in our knowledge of the contents, techniques, and scope of his early volumes of stories published soon after Irving had helped popularize short narrative forms and at about the time Hawthorne and Poe were beginning to work with them. The rare *Book of My Lady* (1833), *Martin Faber . . . and Other Tales* (1837), and *Carl Werner* (1838)² offer appealing subjects for scholarly study; perhaps more directly than Simms's later writing they reveal the range of his interests, the breadth of his reading, the extent of his literary connections, and his youthful experiments with different points of view together with his use of these and other techniques to create fanciful, satiric, or mischievous humor. Contemporary students of his short fiction do not generally view it within the framework afforded by modern studies of narrative technique; nor do they analyze either his modes of narration or his humor in any detail or with much awareness of the connections between them—matters central to this

* Assistant Professor of English, Elon College.

study, which proceeds by discussing the chief masks or personae used to prepare readers for stories in two of the three early compilations. By scrutinizing several stories it next considers his creation of humor through first-person or dramatized narrators who in part reflect the preoccupations of the central personae but who may or may not be reliable tellers of their tales. It then considers humor in third-person or restricted narration and the repeated yet varied subjects, themes, and techniques in certain sequences of stories. The study concludes by surveying Simms's mature short fiction from the vantage of his early writing. Throughout, where pertinent, it suggests some points at which his early stories connect with, influence, or echo Poe's or Irving's work and wherein they derive from English and German pieces.

Before centering on personae and point of view, let me indicate the scope of Simms's early compilations by listing certain important categories of his tales as their subject matter defines them. Reflecting his interest in history, "Chatelard," "Ponce de Leon," "The Venetian Bridal," "La Pola," and "The Festival of Isis" take place in foreign settings and occasionally emphasize historical events; melodramatic and tragic (except for "Ponce"), their plots detail the complications leading to or issuing from heroic sacrifice or thwarted love. Other stories using foreign settings and centering on love are the ghostly narratives "Carl Werner," "Comrade Weickhoff," and "The Spirit Bridegroom," the last of which figures prominently in this study. Revealing Simms's interest in native materials, the Indian tales "Haiglar," "Jocassée," "Missouri," "Logoochie," and "The Children of the Sun" comprise a third group which, among other things, emphasizes love.³ These subject categories, it may be noted, suggest some "exotic" strains in Simms's fiction; they also reveal his sensitivity to the literary tastes of his time.

Because Simms was keenly aware of the book market, he felt the need to prepare potential readers for elements in his fiction which they might not otherwise appreciate or understand. To introduce his first compilations, therefore, he struck two basic postures or invented two central if unevenly sustained narrative masks designed to communicate the mood and contents of his tales. *The Book of My Lady* opens with the sighs of the Bachelor Knight, who in the "Epistle

Prefatory to *My Lady*" strikes the chord of love and chivalry which echoes persistently through the volume, longs for the "era of romance," and offers her his "little tribute," the work written in its spirit (pp. [11], 12). The "Tales and Sketches" section of the 1837 *Martin Faber* opens with the musings of a gentleman relaxing in a comfortable armchair before the "excellent coal fire" (I, 157) which conduces to his dreamy state. By describing his reverie, this figure prepares us for fanciful and fantastic elements in the stories which follow his monologue. His mood, he says, "inclines prodigiously to *diablerie*," and his fancy sometimes riots in "Teutonic extravagance" in a manner "most horribly German" (*MF*, I, 154, 158). As it suits him, like Shakespeare's Owen Glendower, he calls spirits (as well as elves, fairies, and "his arch majesty the devil") from the "vasty deeps" of his imagination (*MF*, I, 158, 154). All this, of course, is Simms's way of discussing the work of the creative faculty; but it also prepares for a crucial question late in the monologue: "Will the reader adopt my mood?" (*MF*, I, 159). If he does he may succumb to the spell which the languid gentleman has cast and respond to the stories on their grounds in what Simms feels is the proper spirit.⁴

The Knight and the dreamer in the armchair are, then, important vehicles of Simms's rhetoric in these collections. They are also useful guides to his preoccupation with chivalric legend, fairy lore, and ghost stories—or, more generally, with romance, fantasy, diablerie, and dreams (the last interest made explicit in pieces which open and close *The Book of My Lady*, "A Dream of the Earth" and "Dreams and Dreaming"). Moreover, the Knight and the dreamer may supply some elements in the characterization of certain typically Simmsian first-person narrators, who share the concerns of the central personae with fancy, whimsy, demon-lore, and love.⁵ As Simms develops them, these narrators display personal qualities which add hitherto overlooked complexities to the tales they tell. They are eccentric, wordy, fatuous, or pompous; in addition they may be timid, aloof, and passive. With these drawbacks it is not surprising that they show little insight into their own or others' motives and behavior. As interpreters of action or guides to meaning, therefore, they may be unreliable narrators whose judgments the reader cannot entirely trust. Unlike Poe, Simms is not often credited with the creation of fully characterized narrators or narrative personae distinct

from himself or of untrustworthy speakers;⁶ yet that he created several such figures is apparent from a detailed study of three tales.

Inept, foolish, or imperceptive narrators appear in "Sweet William," "The Plank," "A Passage of Arms in '76," "The Sins of Typography," and "Major Rocket,"⁷ in each of which the speaker's eccentricity, abstraction, or delusions provide the framework for the plot. The first three also contain dream-visions that create some humor by providing a punch or twist at crucial points. (Presiding over the dream-visions and the odd or delicate fantasies which precede them is the spirit of Washington Irving, whose similar sketches furnished Simms's models for this literary mode.) Of these tales perhaps "Sweet William" best introduces the peculiarly Simmsian narrator and the various functions of his dream.⁸ Its timid speaker is nearly incapable of action, especially when faced with potential sexual involvement. Thus when the attractive, aggressive woman whom he secretly loves approaches him, he finds himself "growing more and more sick and stupid" (a deterioration he can scarcely afford); so he flees her presence and hurries home to bed, where his dreams express his yearning to be all that he is not. In them he meets the captive fairy prince Sweet William and takes part in a battle between fairy legions in which his bravery compensates for and contrasts with his inability to confront his sweetheart. But his violent thrashings and flailings in the dream both suggest and expose his fatuity:

I seized a weapon—I dashed forward into the array—I aimed my blows right and left, on all sides. Already had I stricken the heads from a couple, the most forward of the enemy. . . . when, suddenly, my arms were pinioned by a superior power—the weapon was wrested from my grasp—and, in the twinkling of an eye, I found myself overthrown and struggling for release upon the soft carpet of our sanctuary.

"Why do you hold me back?" I exclaimed to my two brother bachelors. . . . Laughing in my face, they pointed to the two victims I had overthrown. Alas! they seemed no longer the emissaries of the tyrant. They were our two decanters of sherry, from which the heads had been most adroitly stricken, and through the rents of which the goodly liquor was now streaming over the floor. (*MF*, 1, 182-184)

If, as suggested, "Sweet William" is a bow toward Irving, "The Plank" is a nod toward Poe, who may have profited from the ges-

ture. Both stories employ first-person speakers and dream-visions, but instead of delicate fancy and stifled passion “The Plank” explores the grotesquerie deriving from nightmare, shipwreck, drowning, and murder. Its narrator boards an ill-starred vessel ironically named the *Three Cherubs*, a title he and his two fellow passengers emphatically belie. Their card-playing makes the superstitious captain repeatedly prophesy doom; affected by his warnings, the narrator has a dream that Simms uses to objectify aspects of his character and foretell the ensuing disaster. In “a vision . . . much mingled up with the truth,” he sees a “vague, dark, and imperious” demon, “the spirit of the storm” who apparently also represents the “fiend of self”—his “‘thoughts of fame and glory. . . . dreams of conquest . . . schemes for power’” (*MF*, II, 132, 145, 134). The demon’s stern decree—“let him work out his dream by daylight”—in turn foreshadows the crime the narrator commits when, during a fierce storm, the ship is shattered by the *Flying Dutchman* and he and one of his friends, the “fair and melancholy” Hubert, fight for possession of a plank (*MF*, II, 134, 143). During their struggle the furious narrator himself turns demon “as if in close correspondence and sympathy with the spirit that prompted” him (*MF*, II, 145).

In Poesque manner, Simms elaborates the speaker’s aberrant mental state, his indulgence in the morbid and macabre, and his malicious perversity toward his former friend. Thus “I smiled scornfully, even in our grapple of death,” he says, “at the pusillanimity of [Hubert’s] boyish heart.” That youth’s forlorn repetition of his sweetheart’s name “but deepened my phrensy and invigorated my hate. . . . I grappled him more firmly than ever, and withdrew not my grasp until, by a flash of lightning, I beheld him blacker than the wild waters which were dashing around us. I felt the warm blood gush forth upon my hands and arms from his mouth and nostrils, and he hung heavily upon me” (*MF*, II, 145, 146). Soon, the narrator says, he grew mad—“wild as the waters about me, and shrieking almost as loudly in concert with the storm” (*MF*, II, 147). But “on a sudden the entire character of the scene” is “strangely altered,” as he awakens to find himself in a church pew “surrounded by a crowd of old and young ladies, busily employed with a dozen smelling-bottles” who assure him he had been vainly trying to swim (*MF*, II, 149, 150). It has all been a dream; and his vision of the demon, therefore,

was no more than “a dream within a dream,” to borrow one of Poe’s phrases. Like “Sweet William” this tale uses the formula of a sudden shift from violent action to a peaceful scene in which the narrator flounders foolishly before his friends. But here, after Simms’s effective evocation of the mood macabre, the unexpected dream ending weakens the story and wrecks its unity of tone in a manner decidedly un-Poesque.

Other features of Simms’s story, however, look forward to effects Poe would shortly exploit. The narrator’s perverse and morbid mental state, his maniacal mockery and grisly murder of Hubert, and his madness suggest, for example, the similar condition of Poe’s narrators in “The Cask of Amontillado” and “The Tell-Tale Heart.” In its ending “The Plank” also anticipates the conclusion of “The Premature Burial.” But it is to characters and events in Poe’s “MS. Found in a Bottle” that Simms’s story seems closest. Told in the first person, both works describe an ill-fated voyage on a vessel which first encounters a severe storm and then is shattered by a fearful supernatural ship—experiences that cause the apparent mental derangement of both narrators.⁹ On more than one occasion Poe praised his fellow Southerner’s efforts in fiction;¹⁰ Simms’s employment of plots, characters, and episodes anticipating Poe’s furnish further connections between them.

“Sweet William” and “The Plank” show some qualities of the Simmsian first-person speaker; the latter also shows how Simms unintentionally undermines the speaker’s credibility by failing to prepare us for the fact that he is dreaming. He becomes, in effect, an untrustworthy teller of his tale, a victim of his creator’s attempt to cram too many kinds of material into it and of careless or hasty plot construction which slights basic elements like foreshadowing.

On the other hand, in “The Sins of Typography”—a complex satire on foolish poets, unlettered country dwellers, and pompous publishers—Simms deliberately creates an unreliable narrator, a *humor* character who is among his least attractive figures. Although “Sins” is interesting for its characterization, narrative methods, and satire, as a story it is less successful than “Major Rocket,” which likewise employs a *humor* character as untrustworthy speaker. In this tale (revised and expanded from the *Book of My Lady* piece “The Opportunity”), Topic the Unready, unlike other Simms narrators, sees and

readily admits some of his faults. But, blind to others, he fools himself by believing that it is his habitual lateness rather than his excessive loquacity which causes his misfortunes. "I came into the world by half an hour too late," he declaims, "and after the proper time. I have tried through life, but in vain, to recover that lost half hour. In all things I feel its loss . . ." (*MF*, II, 154). Topic charmingly misrepresents himself to the reader by insisting that only his lateness prevents him from seizing each opportunity—especially the chance to propose to Emily Postlethwaite. But, reading his harangues, one soon agrees with his friends that his "inveterate habit of talking" (*MF*, II, 155) rather than his tardiness is the chief cause of his misfortunes. He verifies this suspicion when one of his longest monologues gives his friend Bill Walton the "opportunity" to propose to Emily, who accepts him.

Besides Topic, "Major Rocket" boasts a second *humor* character, the fanatic title figure whose obsession with duelling etiquette counterpoints Topic's concern with his tardiness. Painting Walton as a hated rival, Rocket insists that Topic fight his friend to avenge his wounded name: "'You are bound in honour to blow his brains out, if you do not desire that the impression should go abroad that you have none of your own'" (*MF*, II, 167). Scrupulous about all points in duelling, for a minor breach of the code Rocket arranges to fight Walton after Topic does. Since Topic, predictably, is late for the match, Rocket duels with Walton first and wounds him slightly. It is the only wound he receives, for to Rocket's disgust, remembering their "ancient friendship," Topic and Walton throw their shots away, throw down their weapons, and rush into each other's arms (*MF*, II, 198).

As other Simms stories reflect his reading of nineteenth-century American fiction, so "Major Rocket" suggests his knowledge of eighteenth-century British drama. In developing his title figure he apparently drew on situations and characters in Richard Brinsley Sheridan's play *The Rivals*. Rocket, like Lucius O'Trigger, swaggered onto the scene after the situation of "the rivals" is established. Both figures boast comic names suggestive of their natures; like O'Trigger, Rocket is "a fire-eater—a regular blunderbuss of valour" (*MF*, II, 165) who insists that a duel is the only way to settle matters, despite the jilted lover's demurral. Rigid adherents of principle, both

O'Trigger and Rocket arrange to fight the other lover for a trifling offense. Though unlike in some respects, both Topic and Bob Acres in *The Rivals* practice adopting attitudes and quarrel over the distance for the duel, and both at the critical moment refuse to fight a close friend. The characters of Topic and Acres differ more than do those of Rocket and O'Trigger, and Simms does not use the situation of double identity which complicates the duel in *The Rivals*; but in other respects he seems to have found much booty in Sheridan's play.

A final look at the stories considered above suggests that in general Simms handles first-person narrators, reliable or not, better than he does the dream-vision elements in his tales. Through characterization he attempts to distinguish his speakers from himself and to make them funny; hence he experiments with possibilities inherent in the first-person mode of narration. More specifically, his untrustworthy speakers add complexity to his stories and anticipate some of the uses which Poe would find for comparable figures. Yet readers of Simms and students of narrative technique seem unaware of his work with elements which contemporary writers and critics see as among fiction's central concerns.

Two *Book of My Lady* stories, "Ponce de Leon" and "The Spirit Bridegroom," use third-person perspectives to achieve mild or mischievous humor. Since in German motifs and ambience the latter resembles the ghostly narratives printed in *Carl Werner* (and since its last version appeared there) it may be viewed in relation to them. Using the Faust legend and exploiting the terror of Germany, "Carl Werner" and "Conrade Weickhoff" depict, with abundant gore and gloom, the struggle of good and evil forces for possession of a human soul. By contrast, the Irvingesque "Spirit Bridegroom" mocks Germany's indulgence in terror, gore, gloom, and superstition—in part through Simms's use of narrative technique to transmute potential horror into humor.¹¹

The story portrays the plight of Albert of Holstein, a penniless young student who loves Anastasia D'Arlemont, the daughter of a haughty German nobleman. One evening she finds Albert bleeding in the garden, apparently murdered by her father or his henchmen. Some time later she hears music from her window and spies the form of her supposedly dead lover whom she thereafter nightly meets. Her parents meanwhile press another suitor upon her and arrange a

wedding, but shortly before it Anastasia disappears. Searching a nearby “dark and gloomy” forest, her superstitious friends and relatives find her “half-burned” garments and conclude: “She had become the spirit-bride! The fiend had triumphed in the garb of the earthly lover, and the unhappy maiden had been the victim of a deceit which had led her to dishonour and destruction!” But Simms’s humorous epilogue (conceived in Irving’s spirit) reveals Anastasia’s happier fate: “Such is the tradition; but, about this time, the castle of Holstein became inhabited. Albert, said the popular voice, was restored to life and his habitation; and, in time, there was a bright maiden singing merrily in its walls, in whom, those who knew, found a strange likeness to the beautiful Anastasia D’Arlemont” (*BL*, pp. 298–299).¹²

By opening Anastasia’s consciousness and closing Albert’s, Simms uses restricted narration to achieve suspense, surprise, and humor. As if to prepare us for fearful developments, he describes her “mysterious forebodings . . . at all times so pregnant in the fancy of a German maiden” and her “state of mind bordering on insanity” when she finds her lover’s apparently lifeless body (*BL*, pp. 292, 293). Yet he eschews corresponding insights into Albert: “It is not our object . . . to dwell upon, or seek to analyse, the impressions of his mind . . .” (*BL*, p. 291). He thus exploits the possibilities of the demon-lover theme by refusing to reveal whether his hero is or is not the “spirit bridegroom,” though at points in the story he suggests the truth through humorous touches and through Albert’s insistence that he is alive—which until the epilogue the reader (unlike trusting Anastasia) does not know whether or not to believe.

Moving from Germany to Spain, one finds in “Ponce de Leon” perhaps Simms’s most successful use in his early tales of the third-person point of view for comedy.¹³ In this lighthearted treatment of Spanish history and legend, as an instrument of narrative perspective humor permeates description, commentary, and characterization. The story opens after Spain’s expulsion of the Moors from Granada but shortly before its efforts at conquering the New World. Between the two events, we learn, it lapsed into a “most unseemly . . . unnatural and unbecoming quiet” (*BL*, p. 61); and the knight Ponce de Leon, taking off his armor, fell in love. Much of the story pokes fun at him in his new guise; as Simms portrays him, rather than a semi-

legendary hero Ponce is a bald and aging gentleman enslaved by the intertwined drives of sex and greed. He craves the person and dowry of capricious, coquettish Lady Leonora; but, literal-minded and materialistic, he tends to conflate her charms and her wealth. His suit to her mocks at the same time that it employs conventional chivalric language; enamored of his glory, instead of flattering her vanity he magnifies his achievements: “He described his love, its inveteracy and great irritability, in moving language; now in prose, now in verse, and all in the spirit of that artificial period when love wore wings and worshipped sunbeams, and chivalry carried a lyre in one hand and a lance in the other. . . . He then proceeded to describe the honours of his state, his great wealth, substance, dignity, and so forth . . .” (*BL*, p. 66). But Simms punctures Ponce’s florid proposal by Leonora’s saucy rebuke: “‘Why, bless me, Don Ponce, at your years! how can you talk of such a thing! You are quite bald . . .’” (*BL*, p. 67).

The rejected suitor grows ill, pines away, hears of the marvelous fountain, takes hope, embarks for Florida, and discovers the magic water which suggests the New World’s regenerative powers; on drinking it, he grows “straightway comely and strong in person and buoyant in mind . . .” (*BL*, p. 70). Thus restored, he again seeks Leonora, who, however, has aged while he grew young; now “a superannuated and withered damsel,” she no longer rejects his caresses (*BL*, p. 73). But he rejects hers in consummate haste, and the story ends on a merry note with Ponce claiming “‘I am quite too young for [Leonora], I perceive’” (*BL*, p. 74) as he recommends her to the fountain’s rejuvenative waters.

Both characterization and setting in “Ponce de Leon” may parody the situation in the “Epistle Prefatory to My Lady,” wherein the Bachelor Knight extols the past as the “period of romantic adventure” and yearns to court his lady in its spirit: “Had we . . . been born in such a period, doubt not . . . that lance had been lifted, and bugle wound, and battle done gallantly, in your behalf and for your love” (*BL*, pp. [11], 12). Seen one way, Leonora’s suitor (also a knight) is a comic version of this serious persona; he too adopts the language of chivalry to woo his lady, but he is both funnier and more clumsy than his counterpart. Additionally, the setting of his story contrasts with the Knight’s nostalgic picture of the past—for the tale’s mis-

chievous treatment of Spain fallen into a “peculiar languor of habit . . . a boundless and luxurious indulgence,” of knighthood grown “if not positively unfashionable . . . somewhat cumbersome, at least,” undercuts the persona’s Miniver Cheevy-like lament for the fancied “valour of the knight. . . . the warlike and stirring blasts of the bugle . . .” (*BL*, pp. 61, [11]).

The placing of “Ponce” near the Knight’s complaint encourages us to connect them and leads us to look for further ways in which *Book of My Lady* tales may reflect the concerns of the central spokesman. His fondness for romance may be echoed in a sequence of stories that present the subject of love from varying angles. Like “Ponce” these tales deal with thwarted affection; but unlike “Poncc” they tend to treat it as a serious affair. Thus “Chatelard,” which is placed shortly before “Ponce,” also depicts chivalric language and sentiments, but with little levity—as Chatelard’s rash passion for Mary Queen of Scots brings about his death. Though it too initially portrays frustrated love, “The Venetian Bridal,” which follows “Poncc,” contrasts with it in tone. The Indian narratives “Haiglar,” “Missouri,” and “The Children of the Sun” likewise emphasize love, though their connection with the Knight is more tenuous than that of other tales. Expressed through stories and persona, the subject of love gives interest and a measure of unity to Simms’s self-styled “melange” of fiction, poems, and sketches.

We have noted that the author’s spokesman in the 1837 *Martin Faber*, the dreaming gentleman in the armchair, through fantasies of fairies and demons introduces both subject and ambience in certain pieces. Eight of the nine items in the “Tales and Sketches” section are revised from *The Book of My Lady*; they continue to emphasize love and present it from different angles. Particularly noteworthy here is a sequence of four stories: “The Plank,” which describes murdered Hubert’s sentimental affection; “Major Rocket,” which elaborates the consequences of Topic’s bungled suit; “Chatelard, the Poet” with its melodramatic depiction of passion; and “Ponce” with its burlesque of chivalric themes. More effectively, perhaps, than *The Book of My Lady*, the 1837 *Martin Faber* offers contrasting perspectives on romance and different tones by alternating serious with comic stories.

Unlike these collections, *Carl Werner* neither has nor needs a cen-

tral persona, because it is unified by subject matter, themes, and treatment. Its eight narratives, with one exception, explore either German or Indian materials in a vein which Simms calls the "moral imaginative" (*CW*, I, "Advertisement").¹⁴ Of the German tales "Conrade Weickhoff" echoes "The Star Brethren" (the revised "Spirit Bridegroom") in the situation of the poor young suitor who courts the willing daughter of unwilling parents; in its Faust theme it links with "Carl Werner," to whose happy ending its sad conclusion contrasts. Of the Indian tales, "Jocassée," a tragic treatment of red lovers, follows and contrasts with "Logoochie," a comic treatment of white lovers befriended by the grotesque title figure, "the Indian mischiefmaker—the Puck . . ." (*CW*, II, 87).

Thus the tales in Simms's early collections emphasize love in domestic or foreign settings, explore the supernatural in ghost story or fairy tale, and suggest his interest in Indian legend, European history, and psychological processes like fantasies and dreams. His hitherto unexamined innovations and experiments show him sharpening certain narrative techniques which affect both the general plan of his volumes and particular stories within them. For *The Book of My Lady* and the 1837 *Martin Faber* he employs central spokesmen to indicate atmosphere and subject in some pieces, to provide elements for the characters of first-person narrators, and to help give a measure of unity to his collections. Within individual tales he manipulates point of view and techniques deriving from it to create and sustain humor. When using the first-person or dramatized viewpoint he invents foolish speakers who differ from their creator and unreliable narrators whose *humors* enrich his comedy or who give it ironic dimensions by providing discrepancies between the reader's perceptions and theirs. With a third-person or restricted viewpoint he manages suspense, surprise, description, and commentary to create mild or impish humor.

Evident also in Simms's early collections are literary echoes and foreshadowings which suggest his relationship to American and foreign writing. Published during the years when Irving, Hawthorne, and Poe were shaping the American short story, his work connects in general and specific ways to theirs. Like Irving in *The Sketch Book*, Simms in *The Book of My Lady* employs a semi-fictional persona who shares Geoffrey Crayon's dislike of the commonplace present

and love for the colorful past. More specifically, Irving influenced Simms's dream-visions and his mockery of German superstitions; his example probably encouraged Simms to use European as well as American sources for story material. Like Hawthorne, through the musings of the figure before the coal fire in the 1837 *Martin Faber*, he discusses the powers and provinces of imagination. Anticipating Poe, he employs unreliable narrators and uses morbid psychology to explore the macabre. Moreover, he borrows elements "from the German" (BL, p. 291) to enliven fairy tales and narratives of the supernatural and apparently adapts material from Sheridan to enrich "Major Rocket," one of his better pieces. These and other features of technique and content make his early compilations a homogeneous unit for study and discussion. Some of these features continue to characterize his later short narratives, and some do not.

Simms persists in using domestic and foreign settings in his short fiction, in drawing on history for material, and in employing love situations as the basis for many of his plots. *The Wigwam and the Cabin* (1845), perhaps his most successful assemblage of stories, contains tales of frontier life whose use of native settings strikes a blow for the Young America-cause which he then espoused.¹⁵ In "The Arm-Chair of Tustenuggee" he mines the vein of humorous Indian material opened in "Logoochie," and in one of his best stories, "The Lazy Crow," he explores comic Negro superstitions. In "Mr. Green," a satire on polite city life added to a later British edition, he employs *humor* characters and attacks duelling as he had done in "Major Rocket." In the ghost story "Grayling" as in "Conrade Weickhoff" and "Carl Werner" he uses the supernatural to good effect.

By contrast, *Southward Ho!* (1854), which prints several revised *Book of My Lady* tales, leans heavily on European material whose lofty subjects have little leavening of humor. In "Love's Last Supper" and "The Pilgrim of Love" Simms explores chivalric themes. In "The Ship of Fire" and to some extent in "The Bride of Fate" he uses the supernatural, implying in the latter (as in "Grayling") that a character's visions of ghosts may suggest psychological states. Gone from these stories of the supernatural, however, is the levity of "The Spirit Bridegroom," and gone, too, is the fairy lorc that we find in the early collection.

Unlike *The Book of My Lady* and the 1837 *Martin Faber* (and like *Carl Werner*), the later volumes neither have nor need central personae. *The Wigwam and the Cabin* is unified by similarities in material and treatment, while *Southward Ho!* is loosely held together by its framing narrative which introduces and links the tales.¹⁶ On the other hand, as in his early work so here Simms employs the third-person viewpoint for comedy and occasionally uses humorous first-person speakers, who differ from the narrators of his youthful pieces by functioning chiefly as agents for transmitting tales rather than as actors in them.¹⁷ On the whole, the later collections display the author's characteristic mature comedy, usually described as "robust," "broad," and "masculine"; they do not in general rely on fantasy, dreams, or diablerie for humor. But precisely because these volumes show some changes in his subjects, narrators, and comedy, there are good reasons for scrutinizing his first ventures into short fiction. Such scrutiny reveals the young Simms's diversified subject matter, his wide reading, his use of different narrative techniques, and his varied humor. It suggests the need for studying many aspects of his work in the short story, early and late, as part of a necessary re-evaluation of his writing.

NOTES

1. See J. Allen Morris's pioneering work, "The Stories of William Gilmore Simms," *American Literature*, 14 (March 1942), 20–35; Eugene Current-Garcia, "Simms's Short Stories: Art or Commercialism?" *Mississippi Quarterly*, 15 (Spring 1962), [56]–67; J. Wesley Thomas, "The German Sources of William Gilmore Simms," *Anglo-German and American-German Crosscurrents*, 1 (Chapel Hill, 1957), [127]–153; John C. Guilds, "The Achievement of William Gilmore Simms: His Short Fiction," *Spectrum: Monograph Series in the Arts and Sciences*, 11 (Atlanta, 1972), 25–35; rpt. as the "Introduction" to *Stories and Tales, The Writings of William Gilmore Simms, Centennial Edition*, ed. John C. Guilds, v (Columbia, 1974). Professor Guilds kindly sent me a copy of this work in preliminary form. Of the stories mentioned herein it reprints "Carl Werner" and "The Bride of Fate"; and in addition to short works it contains novellas or lengthy tales. None of these studies of Simms's short fiction deals primarily with his early work or explores its technical experiments, comedy, or contents in any detail.
2. Full titles are *The Book of My Lady: A Melange by a Bachelor Knight* (Boston, 1833), containing stories, sketches, and poems; *Martin Faber, the Story of a*

Criminal; and Other Tales (New York, 1837); and *Carl Werner, an Imaginative Story: With Other Tales of Imagination* (New York, 1838). The first and third of these works will hereafter be cited within text and notes as *BL* and *CW* respectively. The second will be cited as *MF* but referred to as “the 1837 *Martin Faber*” to distinguish it from Simms’s previous separate publication of the title narrative, a novella, in 1833.

Simms wrote short stories during most of his literary career, collecting them in five volumes, by conservative count. Later in this study I briefly discuss *The Wigwam and the Cabin* and *Southward Ho!* I do not treat *The Lily and the Totem* because it is not a collection of short stories in the usual sense, but a series of interwoven narratives about the French Huguenots in Florida which he calls on the title page “a series of sketches, picturesque and historical.” Nor do I consider his several novelettes and novellas.

3. Except where necessary, I do not discuss in detail the complex bibliographical problems caused by the circumstances of publication of certain early tales. Simms published some in periodicals before or after he collected them in book form; he collected some in book form more than once; he thoroughly revised and expanded many of them before republishing them in books or journals, in the process often changing their titles, so that pieces called one thing in *BL* are called another in *MF* or *CW*. In text and notes I use the title of the particular version of the story under consideration and try to indicate changes in title and contents where appropriate; but I find rigid consistency in such matters no easier than Simms did. There is no thoroughly reliable bibliography of his short fiction, though the listing in Morris, “The Stories of Simms,” pp. 22–26, is helpful.
4. This monologue incorporates elements from the *BL* “Advertisement” and “A Dream of the Earth.”
5. Mr. Current-Garcia claims that in his early compilations “Simms was feeling his way into the literary market, trying his hand at a variety of subject matter and treatment in the hope of discovering a popular and profitable vein to exploit,” op. cit., p. 57. Similarly, he calls the Bachelor Knight’s apologia for chivalry an appeal to “the sentimental lady reader of annuals and giftbooks,” p. 58. I agree that Simms’s tales and personae show his sensitivity to contemporary literary conditions. But the commercial aspect of his early work should not blind us to its artistic dimensions, nor to the varied functions of the Bachelor Knight.
6. Wayne Booth’s fine study *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago, 1961) expands our knowledge of the extent to which past and present writers of narrative employ unreliable speakers and the many uses they find for them. Among scholars who discuss Poe’s use of such speakers are Floyd Stovall, “The Conscious Art of Edgar Allan Poe,” *College English*, 24 (March 1963), 417–421; James W. Gargano, “The Question of Poe’s Narrators,” *College English*, 25 (December 1963), 177–181; Calvin Skaggs, “Narrative Point of View in Edgar Allan Poe’s Criticism and Fiction,” Diss. Duke Univ., 1966; and Robert Regan, “Hawthorne’s ‘Plagiary’; Poe’s Duplicity,” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 25 (December

1970), 294. John Lauber, however, claims that Poe does not often use unreliable narrators; see “‘Ligeia’ and Its Critics: A Plea for Literalism,” *Studies in Short Fiction*, 4 (Fall 1966), 30.

7. These are titles Simms gave in the 1837 *MF* to stories which, with one exception, he had earlier published in *BL*; the exception is “The Sins of Typography.”
8. Irving’s dream-visions or fantasies in *The Sketch Book* which apparently influenced Simms include “The Art of Bookmaking” and “The Mutability of Literature.” An *MF* story, “Sweet William,” splices together two pieces from *BL*, “The Death of a Fairy” and “A Tale of Faerie.”
9. The central outlines of “The Plank” were secure by 1828 when Simms published its briefer first version, “A Picture of the Sea,” in a Charleston periodical, the *Southern Literary Gazette*, 1 (December 1828), 208–215. He developed Hubert’s character and the narrator’s psychological state in the next version, “A Story of the Sea,” published in *BL* in 1833, the same year that Poe published “MS. Found in a Bottle.” To “The Plank” his chief addition is the speaker’s vision of the demon. John C. Guilds suggests that Poe (stationed in South Carolina in 1828) may have read the first version; see “William Gilmore Simms and the *Southern Literary Gazette*,” *Studies in Bibliography*, 21 (Charlottesville, 1968), 72, and “Poe’s ‘MS. Found in a Bottle’: A Possible Source,” *Notes and Queries*, n.s. 3 (1956), 452.
10. See, for example, Poe’s favorable review of *The Damsel of Darien* in *Burton’s Gentleman’s Magazine*, 5 (November 1839), 283–285, and his comments on “Grayling” in his review of *The Wigwam and the Cabin* for the *Broadway Journal*, 2 (October 4, 1845), 190–191. For connections between the writers, see Arlin Turner, “Poe and Simms: Friendly Critics, Sometimes Friends,” in *Papers on Poe: Essays in Honor of John Ward Ostrom*, ed. Richard P. Veler (Springfield, Ohio, 1972), pp. [140]–160.
11. Thomas, “The German Sources of Simms,” pp. 130–135, discusses the derivations and ambience of these stories. He also claims German influence on “Sweet William” and other early pieces. There is some Irvingesque humor in the opening sections of “Conrade Weickhoff,” but it disappears as the tale unfolds.
12. Simms published this story at least five times, in the process considerably revising it. As “The Dead Lover” it appeared in the *Southern Literary Gazette*, 1 (February 1829), 282–286; drawing on Bürger’s ballad “Lenore,” it is a straightforward tale of the demon-lover who comes to claim his bride at the moment of her marriage to another. Revised, retitled, and made humorous, the story next appeared in *BL*; further revised (but not retitled) and made serious, it was printed in the *Southern Literary Journal*, 3 (November 1836), 193–211. Reprinted with minor changes in the 1837 *MF*, after further revision it appeared in *CW* as “The Star Brethren.” The last three versions, in which a fallen angel takes the place of the dead lover, borrow both from Göethe’s *Faust* and (apparently) from the Cupid and Psyche legends. Thomas, “The German Sources of Simms,” pp. 130–131, discusses the first and last versions but does not mention the *BL* tale. John C. Guilds treats it briefly in “Simms and the *Southern Literary Gazette*,” pp. 73–74; I consider Irving’s influence upon it

in "Simms and Irving," *Mississippi Quarterly*, 20 (Winter 1966-67), 28-29. It is the only version with any humor.

13. In the 1837 *MF* this story, slightly revised, is retitled "Juan Ponce de Leon." Occasionally in its prologue Simms uses the pronoun "I," but he narrates the story proper from a third-person perspective. Both versions refer to Irving's work in Spanish history and indicate some reservations about it.
14. The exception is "Ipsistos." Limited space prevents consideration of the comedy in "The Cherokee Embassage."
15. Like those in Simms's early compilations, many *Wigwam and Cabin* stories first saw light in journals. The volume, which was issued in two series, reprints "Oakatibbe" from *BL* and "Jocassée" from *CW*. Its British edition reprints stories from the first series and adds two new tales, "Mr. Green" and "How Would You Like It?" See *Life in America; or, The Wigwam and the Cabin* (Aberdeen and London, 1848).
16. The frame has a first-person narrator who seems slightly less fictitious than the Bachelor Knight or the gentleman in the armchair. Characters in the frame are the mouthpieces for the tales.
17. An exception is the speaker who is central to the action in the *Wigwam and Cabin* story "Those Old Lunes." Amusing pieces in *Southward Ho!* include ["Oyster Wars"] and ["Legend of the One-Legged Lady"], J. Allen Morris's titles for untitled tales ("The Stories of Simms," p. 26). Portions of "The Bride of the Battle" are funny also.

S. Weir Mitchell and the Germination of a Poem

JAMES M. GIBSON*

SILAS WEIR MITCHELL, prominent Philadelphia physician and neurologist and trustee of the University of Pennsylvania 1875-1911, was long associated with the Philadelphia Orthopaedic Hospital and Infirmary for Nervous Diseases. Throughout his medical career he wrote over one hundred neurological papers, as well as numerous studies of pharmacology, toxicology, and physiology. In addition to his medical studies, Mitchell also wrote novels and poetry; his best effort, *Hugh Wyne, Free Quaker*, is a historical romance of the Revolution set in Philadelphia. His dual interest in medicine and literature led him to explore the process of poetic composition from a psychological point of view.

In his manuscript autobiography Mitchell analyzes his composition of verse, "the process by which a poem originates in my mind and is carried to such completion as I am capable of."¹ First comes the "germ thought" or inspiration—a pleasant idea, a critical insight, or a comparison capable of development. This necessitates a decision whether "certain things can be better said in verse than in prose."² Having decided to write verse, he immediately begins to think in rhythm. "The moment the thoughts begin to assume form, they assume rhythmic form."³ The choice of rhythm seems to follow spontaneously. Mitchell finds the reasons for his choice difficult to state: "Sometimes one gets caught in a rhythm not suited to the subject . . . but as a rule one finds the right rhythmic instrument through which to develop ideas."⁴ After the initial inspiration, the decision to write in verse, and the choice of rhythm, comes a long period of meditation, sometimes lasting many months. Although he occasionally made verse in his sleep, most of the time he resorted to hard labor. "Now and then a line or two comes easily, but as a rule it is slow, patient biding on the shore and waiting to see what cargo the ships will fetch me for choice."⁵ As the germ idea slowly develops

* Assistant Professor of English, Houghton College, Houghton, N.Y.

through the further train of thought, new ideas suggest themselves; and the poem may develop in a direction different than that originally intended. To describe this process, Mitchell contrasts poetic composition with the testing of a scientific hypothesis:

In scientific matters, it is a matter of continual summoning of thoughts, clothing them in suitable language, accepting them or rejecting them as unsuitable, with ever the feeling that the intense statement possible in poetic form may be just that inevitable mode of stating the thing which is at once felt as an immense joy by the creator of the expression. Now there must be some difference between this and scientific discovery. That consists of the presentation and rejection of hypotheses, and the testing of these by thought or by experiment. The use of hypothesis in poetry consists in comparing statements of a thought judged to be suitable and the rejection or acceptance of that thought and its presentation in forms found to be satisfactory.⁶

The poetic result must not be merely a suitable statement but rather a satisfactory one. An “immense joy,” immediately felt by the poet, signals the achievement of the satisfactory poetic statement. “In attainment, in high set verse, the sense of complete capture is felt, as a friend says, like a physical orgasm, a kind of mind rapture.”⁷

Near the end of his analysis Mitchell remarks, “I have often considered it a pity that we had not the history of some great poem, say Keats’ ‘Ode to a Grecian Urn,’ from the egg down to the final development and ultimate corrections. No such documents exist that I know of.”⁸ An S. Weir Mitchell autograph poem, which I recently discovered among uncatalogued manuscripts in the Horace Howard Furness Memorial Library of the University of Pennsylvania, provides just such a history of a poem’s composition and illustrates Mitchell’s own process of poetic creation.

On January 15, 1896, Mitchell wrote to Horace Howard Furness and enclosed with the letter three stanzas describing his pleasure in hearing Dr. Furness read Shakespeare.⁹

Philadelphia, Pa.

“ ’Fore God it was a gallant sight
To see that fleet of argosies,
Blown by the noble wind of fame,
[4] Sail down the stormy centuries.

"Lo, the 'Great Harry' hath the van
The royal banner o'er her set,
And peer and peasant throng around

[8] The Lion-Lord, Plantagenet.

"A larger fame today is theirs,
No more of mocking time the sport,
The blazonry of Shakespeare given

[12] Hath twice ennobled Agincourt."

"Dear Furness,

"I wrote in my journal that never to be forgotten night these three verses and meant to send them to you, not because of their being good, but to show you how I felt the stormy splendor of it all—Read and burn them; with time which now I have not, they could be bettered into poetry—now they be verse—and no more.

"Yours,
"Weir."

15th January, 1896.

Furness did not burn the verses, and two years later, Mitchell expanded them into the five-stanza poem "On a Boy's First Reading of the Play of 'King Henry the Fifth.'"¹⁰ Intervening between these two states of the poem, the recently discovered autograph poem, entitled "Henry the Fifth" and sent from Venice to Horace Howard Furness in June 1897, provides the missing evidence in the history of this poem. The heretofore unpublished 1897 version appears first, and the published version second. The words or phrases that differ appear in italics in each poem.¹¹

Henry the Fifth

When youth was lord of my unchallenged fate,
And time seemed but the vassal of my will,
I entertainèd certain guests of state,
The great of *olden* days, who faithful still,

[5] Have kept with me the pact my youth had made,

And I remember how one galleon rare
From the *long* distance of a time long dead,
Came on the wings of a *most* fortuned air
With sound of martial music heralded,

[10] In *blazoned* pride of storied shields arrayed.

So the great Harry with high trumpetings!
The wind of victory in her burly sails
And all her deck with clang of armour rings
And underflown the *flag of lilies* trails,
[15] And overflown the royal lions ramp

The waves she rode are strewn with *many* wrecks;
Great was the fleet with which she sailed, but yet
Comes time-defying laughter from her decks—
Where stands the lion-lord Plantagenet,
[20] Large-hearted, merry king of court & camp.

Sail on!—*the winds & tempests—stress of time*
That spared so few, shall thee with joy escort,
And with the stormy thunder of thy rhyme
Shalt thou salute full many a centuried port
[25] With—Ho! for *Harry's red Agincourt*—

Weir Mitchell
Venice June 1897

*On a Boy's First Reading of the Play
of "King Henry the Fifth"*

When youth was lord of my unchallenged fate,
And time seemed but the vassal of my will,
I entertainèd certain guests of state—
The great of *older* days, who, faithful still,
[5] Have kept with me the pact my youth had made.

And I remember how one galleon rare
From the *far* distance of a time long dead
Came on the wings of a *fair*-fortuned air,
With sound of martial music heralded,
[10] In *blazonry* of storied shields arrayed.

So, the Great Harry with high trumpetings,
The wind of victory in her burly sails!
And all her deck with clang of armor rings:
And under-flown the *Lily standard* trails,
[15] And over-flown the royal Lions ramp.

The waves she rode are strewn with *silent* wrecks,
Her proud sea-comrades once; but ever yet
Comes time-defying laughter from her decks,

Where stands the lion-lord Plantagenet,
[20] Large-hearted, merry, king of court and camp.

Sail on! sail on! *The fatal blasts* of time,
That spared so few, shall thee with joy escort;
And with the stormy thunder of thy rhyme
Shalt thou salute full many a centuried port
[25] With "Ho! for *Harry* and red Agincourt!"

1898

These three versions of the same poem readily illustrate Mitchell's process of poetic composition. The germ thought remains the same throughout the three poems. Although many great works of literature, blown by the "wind of fame" and tossed by the "fatal blasts of time," have sailed "down the stormy centuries," that rare galleon, Shakespeare's *King Henry V*, still triumphantly displays its royal banner, as she rides the waves "strewn with silent wrecks" of her once "proud sea-comrades." The initial iambic rhythm also remains the same, even though the meter expands from tetrameter to pentameter.

Mitchell thoroughly reworked the original verses of 1896, however, as he searched for the satisfactory statement of each line. Enough verbal similarities remain, nevertheless, to trace the process of composition. "The blazonry of Shakespeare given" (11) in the 1896 version became "Blazoned pride of storied shields" (10) in 1897, and then reverted to "blazonry of storied shields" (10) in 1898. Mitchell expanded the original line, "The royal banner o'er her set" (6), to two lines in the later versions (14-15): the "royal lions" of England fly victoriously over the French "flag of lilies" or "Lily standard." "The Lion-Lord, Plantagenet" (8) becomes in both later versions "Where stands the lion-lord Plantagenet" (19), due to the change in meter. Finally, the overall feeling of "stormy splendor" that Mitchell notes in his letter to Furness appears recast as a line of the two later poems, "And with the stormy thunder of thy rhyme" (23).

Certain other changes from the 1897 to the 1898 version also illustrate the search for satisfactory statement. The "many wrecks" (16) of the former becomes "silent wrecks" (16) in the latter, and the great fleet (17) changes to "her proud sea-comrades" (17). The "winds & tempests—stress of time" (21) becomes "fatal blasts of

time" (21). In each case specific adjectives replace general, and the poem gathers strength and intensity.

Felix Schelling, in his essay "S. Weir Mitchell, Poet and Novelist," enthusiastically praised the final version of "On a Boy's First Reading of the Play of 'King Henry the Fifth.'" Ranking the poem with Mitchell's "Ode to a Lycian Tomb" and "Ode to a Sea Gull," Schelling writes:

Weir Mitchell challenges his right to a place of distinction in this majestic procession of the poets of this English tongue of ours who have marched down to fame on the highway of a great tradition. True is our poet, too, to other hardly lesser things: a chaste and noble diction distinguished by clarity, directness, manliness, and strength, the use, not the abuse of language; a versification, too, is his at once lithe and musical, a guiding taste and an instinct, rare among poets, as to when to hold the hand.¹²

Although the reader today might not agree with this unqualified praise of the poem, "On a Boy's First Reading of the Play of 'King Henry the Fifth'" deserves at least a small niche in literary history for the insight it offers into the process of poetic composition.

NOTES

1. Quoted by Anna Robeson Burr, *Weir Mitchell: His Life and Letters* (New York, 1929), p. 258. Burr quotes from an incomplete, manuscript autobiography, which I have been unable to locate.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid., p. 257.
6. Ibid., p. 259.
7. Ibid., p. 260.
8. Ibid., p. 259.
9. Ibid., p. 354. I have numbered the lines in this poem, as in the other two, for convenience in reference.
10. Silas Weir Mitchell, *The Complete Poems* (New York, 1914), pp. 362-363.
11. The manuscript poem "Henry the Fifth" is presently catalogued in the manuscript collection of the Horace Howard Furness Memorial Library of the University of Pennsylvania. *Great Harry* (great Harry in the manuscript version) is italicized in the printed version.
12. Felix E. Schelling, "S. Weir Mitchell, Poet and Novelist," in *Shakespeare Biography and Other Papers Chiefly Elizabethan* (Philadelphia, 1937), p. 109.

The Elusive *Visions d'Oger le Danoys*

JUDITH M. DAVIS*

IN his introduction to the ballad of "Thomas Rymer," Francis James Child stated that ". . . the story of Thomas and the Elf-queen is but another version of what is related of Ogier le Danois and Morgan the Fay." In a footnote he added, "The relations of Thomas Rhymers and Ogier might, perhaps, be cleared up by the poem of The Visions of Ogier in Fairy Land." After citing Brunet's description of the book, he observed, "The National Library is not now in possession of the volume; nor have all the inquiries I have been able to make, though most courteously aided in France, resulted, as I hoped, in the finding of a copy."¹ As recently as 1970, Professor Knud Togeby, internationally known bibliographer of works on Ogier le Danois, said he had still not been able to put his hands on the work. However, he had found a Bibliothèque Nationale call number for *Les Visions d'Oger le Danoys au royaume de Fairie*: Cote Réserve Ye.1596.² I decided to look for the elusive volume when I visited Paris in January 1972.

Entering the Bibliothèque Nationale, I had as guides Professor Togeby's notation and Brunet's description:

—Le Premier (second et troisième) livre des visions d'Oger le Danoys au royaume de Fairie. Imprime à Paris pour Ponce Roffet, dict le Faulcheur, 1542, pet. in-8. de 48 ff. sign. a—mijj. [13530]

Opuscule en vers, devenue rare.

A la suite de ce poëme, dans l'exemplaire de la Biblioth. impériale, se trouvent: *Le livre des visions fantastiques . . .* Paris, Ponce Roffet, 1542, pet. in-8 de 24 ff. — *le philosophie parfait* (poëme de Fr. Habert), 24 ff. avec fig. sur bois,—et *le Temple de vertu*, petit poëme en 16 ff. de la même date et chez le même libraire (le dernier est de l'imprimerie de Denys Janot); mais ces différentes pièces en vers ne sont pas une suite obligée des visions d'Oger: néanmoins elles faisaient partie de l'exemplaire vendu 4 liv. 4 sh. Heber; et rel. en mar. citr. d. de mar. v. 305 fr. d'Essling.—Du Verdier, à l'article OGÉR, cite *les Visions*, sous la date de 1548.³

* Assistant Professor of Public and Environmental Affairs, Indiana University.

Hoping to verify Professor Togebey's information and perhaps to add to it, I searched through the Bibliothèque Nationale's title catalogue of books printed before 1700; I found nothing under the first title in the *Manuel*. According to Brunet, however, the Bibliothèque Impériale copy of the work was bound with three others; since one of them had been written by "Fr. Habert," I thought the volume containing it might be listed under his name. Looking in the author catalogue under Habert, then, I found the following entry: "Habert, François, *dit* Habert de Berry.—Le Livre des visions fantastiques [par F. Habert], avec privilège. Paris, P. Roffet dict Le Faulcheur, 1542. In-8°, 24 ff." Two copies were listed: Cote Réserve Ye.1596-1599 and Cote Réserve Yf.4355. Copy Yf.4355 was in the process of being microfilmed; I therefore requested, received, and examined Ye.1596-1599. This volume corresponds exactly to Brunet's description: the four works he cited appear in the volume as Ye.1596, 1597, 1598, and 1599 respectively. The title of Ye.1596 reads as follows: *Le premier livre des visions d'Oger le dannoys au royaume de Fairie.* (*Le livre des visions fantastiques* is Ye.1597 and appears as a single work in Yf.4355.)

Since in the catalogue the *Visions fantastiques* was ascribed to Habert, and since Brunet listed Habert as the author of the *Philosophe parfaict*, I suspected that the *Visions d'Oger* was his as well. To confirm my suspicion I consulted Henri Franchet, *Le Philosophe parfaict et le temple de vertu de François Habert; Nouvellement remis en lumière avec notice et notes* (Paris, 1922), which contains the most complete and accurate bibliography of Habert's works to date. On page xv, Franchet listed "*Le premier livre des visions d'Oger le Dannoys au royaume de Fairie. Avec privilege. Imprimé à Paris pour Ponce Roffet, dict le Faulcheur, libraire demourant au Palais sur les [sic] second degréz, du costé de la grand salle. 1542. Ce volume renferme en réalité trois livres.*"⁴ . . . Même disposition typographique que les deux ouvrages précédents [*Le Philosophe parfaict* and *Le Temple de vertu*] et que le *Livre des visions fantastiques* imprimé sans doute quelques semaines après." He also listed another copy to be found in the Musée Condé, 888; and another edition, "*Les trois livres des visions du vaillant Ogier le Danois au Royaume de Fairie. Imprime nouvellement. A Lyon, par Benoist Rigaud. S.D. In-8° de 61 pp. I f. blanc. Catal. Pichon, 1897, № 801.*" He stated that this version was Habert's reimpression of the Paris edition.

The *Visions d'Oger* eluded critical notice for decades because Brunet, originally referring to the work under *Ogier le danoys* both in his *Manuel* (iv, cols. 170–173) and in his later *Supplément* (Paris, 1880, ii, col. 69), never attributed the work to Habert. Furthermore, in his “Table méthodique” under the classification of “Poésies anonymes des XV^e et XVI^e siècles,” Brunet referred to the exemplar as “LE LIVRE des visions fantastiques.” This rather confusing reference had two consequences: (1) it seemed to confirm that the *Visions d'Oger* was anonymous—indeed, one cannot find the *Visions d'Oger* under Habert’s name in the catalogues of the Bibliothèque Nationale; and (2) it caused others to confuse the two works—even Auguste Théret, whose notes on Habert were fairly comprehensive, attributed to Habert “Les Visions Fantastiques d’Oger le Danoys au Royaume de Féerie.”⁵ Given these circumstances, it is not surprising that those interested in Ogier le Danois or in “Thomas Rymer” have had difficulty finding the elusive *Visions d'Oger*.

It appears at first glance that the *Visions d’Oger le Danoys au royaume de Fairie* does little to clear up the relations between Ogier and “Thomas Rymer.” Scholars who are concerned with Ogier le Danois, however, will find in this work a versified variation—stylistically turgid but critically interesting—of an episode in the earlier prose romance edited by Professor Togeby.⁶

NOTES

1. Francis James Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (Boston and New York, 1883–98), i, 319, and n.‡.
2. Letters from Professor Knud Togeby to John W. Davis, July 28 and August 27, 1970.
3. Jacques Charles Brunet, *Manuel du libraire et de l’amateur de livres*, 5ème éd. (Paris, 1860–65), iv, col. 173.
4. In his “Additions et Corrections,” he added, “Ces trois livres sont bien tous trois des *Visions d’Oger*. . . .”
5. Auguste Théret, *Littérature du Berry; Poésie: Les XVI, XVII et XVIIImes siècles*, 1^{re} éd. (Paris, 1898), p. 126. Italics mine.
6. Knud Togeby, ed., *Ogier le Danoys: Roman en prose du XV^e siècle* (København, 1967), pp. 270–281.

University of Pennsylvania *Library Chronicle*

Index to Volumes XXXI–XL

Acquisitions, xxxi:31–36; xxxii:84–88; xxxiii:67–72; xxxiv:3–6; xxxvi:105–109, 118–125; xxxviii:160
After Missolonghi: Scott on Byron, 1824–32 (Clubbe), xxxix:18–33
Albertano da Brescia (fl. 1246), xxxvi:105–109
Aphra Behn's Strange News from Virginia (Witmer and Freehafer), xxxiv:7–23
Archer, Michael
 A Dream of Bounden Duty, xxxii:89–100
Armistead, Samuel G. (with Ruth J. Dean)
 A Fifteenth-Century Spanish Book List, xl:73–87

"A backward glance on my own road" (Westlake), xxxiv:100–102
Bank Note, Corkscrew, Flea and Sedan: A Checklist of Eighteenth-Century Fiction (Meeker), xxxv:52–57
Baretti, Giuseppe Marc'Antonio (1719–1789), xxxvi:115–117
Baugh, Albert C.
 The Making of *Beves of Hampton*, xl:15–37
Beckford, William (1759–1844), xxxvii:37–69
The Beckford Library Sale of 1817 (Gemmott), xxxvii:37–69
Behn, Aphra (1640–1689)
 The Widow Ranter (1690), xxxiv:7–23
The Bell without a Belfry (Mills), xxxix:34–39
Bennett, Scott (with Robert Carringer)
 Dreiser to Sandburg: Three Unpublished Letters, xl:252–256
Benoist, Howard
 An Unpublished Letter of Samuel Richardson, xxxvi:63–66

Benton, John F.
 Theocratic History in Fourteenth-Century France: The *Liber Bellorum Domini* by Pierre de la Palu (University of Pennsylvania MS. Lea 45), xl:38–54
Benzing, Josef
 Eine deutsche Übersetzung des "Opus de felicitate" von Philipp Beroaldus (1502), xl:55–61
Bérenger de La Tour, François (1522?–1599?), xxxvii:116–125
Bérenger de La Tour and Sir John Davies: Two Poets Who Set the Planets Dancing (Sanderson), xxxvii:116–125
Bernard, Kenneth
 Edgar Huntly: Charles Brockden Brown's Unsolved Murder, xxxiii:30–53
Beroaldus, Philipp (1453–1505)
 "Opus de felicitate," xl:55–61
Beves of Hampton, xl:15–37
Bewick, Thomas (1753–1828), xxxiv:67–77
Bibliographical Description of Dreiser's *The "Genius"* (Oldani), xxxix:40–55
Bibliographical Studies in Honor of Rudolf Hirsch (Miller and Waldman, eds.), xl:3–145
Bibliography and the Biographer (Elias), xxxviii:25–[45]
Block, Gordon A. Lincoln Collection, xxxi:120
Brainerd, John G.
 A Small Find with an Interesting Result, xxxix:56
Brinton, Judge Jasper Yeates Franklin and the Conspiracy of Catiline, xxxiii:2–7
Brito, Guillelmus (13th century), xxxii:1–17

Brooks, Van Wyck (1886–1963),
xxxii:1–6, 25

Brown, Charles Brockden (1771–1810)
Edgar Huntly, xxxiii:30–53

Bühler, Curt F.
Three Early Venetian Editions of
Augustinus Datus and the Press of
Florentius de Argentina, xl:62–69

Buonarroti, Michelangelo (1475–1564),
xxxix:76–80

Butler, Samuel (1612–1680)
Hudibras, xxxvii:126–135

Butler's Use of the *Rump* in *Hudibras*
(Horne), xxxvii:126–135

Byron, George Gordon Noël Byron,
Baron (1788–1824), xxxxiii:8–29,
97–114; xxxiv:24–50; xxxix:18–33

Cain, xxxiv:94–99

The Byron Collection in Memory of
Meyer Davis, Jr. (Marshall),
xxxxiii:8–29

The Byron Will of 1809 (Marshall),
xxxxiii:97–114

Byron's Letter to Murray on *Cain*
(Mortenson), xxxiv:94–99

Carringer, Robert (with Scott Bennett)
Dreiser to Sandburg: Three Unpublished Letters, xl:252–256

The Catalogue for the Sale of Byron's
Books (Marshall), xxxiv:24–50

Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Libraries
of the University of Pennsylvania to
1800: Supplement A (Hirsch),
xxxv:3–32; xxxvi:3–36, 79–104;
xxxvii:3–23, 91–115 (Corrigenda and
Index, xxxviii:99–122)

Chambers, Marlene
Early Printing and Book Illustration
in Spain, xxxix:3–17

The Charles Patterson Van Pelt Library
Building Receives an Award (Mills),
xxxii:26–27

Chasin, Martin
The Lees Clock in the Rare Book
Collection: An Historical Inquiry,
xxxiv:51–61

Chemistry. Education. Introductory
lectures, xxxvii:143–150

Churchill, Sir Winston Leonard Spencer
(1874–1965), xxxi:117–119

Clements, A. L.
Thomas Traherne: A Chronological
Bibliography, xxxv:36–51

Clubbe, John
After Missolonghi: Scott on Byron,
1824–32, xxxix:18–33

Cochran, Thomas C., xxxviii:160–162

Coleridge, Samuel Taylor (1772–1834),
xxxii:7–22

A Comic Homunculus before *Tristram*
Shandy (Johnson), xxxi:83–90

Dallett, Francis J.
University Archives: Cochran Papers,
xxxviii:160–162

University Archives: Donors and
Accessions, xxxviii:164

University Archives: News and
Accessions, xxxix:126–128

Daly, Lloyd W.
A Greek Evangelical Leaf with
Ephonetic Notation, xl:70–72

Guillelmus Brito and His Works,
xxxii:1–17

Darwin, Charles (1809–1882), xxxi:7–22

Darwin, Coleridge and the Theory of
Unconscious Creation (Eiseley),
xxxii:7–22

Datus, Augustinus (1420–1478), xl:62–
69

David, Charles W.
Foreword to Bibliographical Studies
in Honor of Rudolf Hirsch, xl:9–14

Davies, Sir John (1569–1626),
xxxvii:116–125

Davis, Mr. and Mrs. Meyer,
xxxxiii:8–29

Dean, Ruth J. (with Samuel G.
Armistead)
A Fifteenth-Century Spanish Book
List, xl:73–87

Deischer, Claude K.
The Twain Are Brought Together,
xxxvi:118–125

Eine deutsche Übersetzung des “Opus
de felicitate” von Philipp Beroaldus
(1502) (Benzing), xl:55–61

The Devil and Francis Petrarch
(Wrigley), xxxiii:75–96

Devlin, James J.
William Coleman to Thomas Philipps: On the Early 19th Century American Theater, xxxx:40–60

Dovaston, John F. M. (1782–1854),
xxxxv:67–77

Dowell, Richard W.
Medical Diary Reveals First Dreiser Visit to the University of Pennsylvania, xxxviii:92–96

Dreiser, Theodore (1871–1945),
xxxii:117–136; xxxvii:70–85;
xxxviii:3–96; xl:252–256
Ev'ry Month, xxxviii:46–66
The Financier, xxxviii:67–77
The "Genius," xxxix:40–55
“Notes on Life,” xxxviii:78–91
Sister Carrie, xxxiii:119–133

Dreiser to Sandburg: Three Unpublished Letters (Carringer and Bennett),
xl:252–256

Dreiser’s Debt to *Jay Cooke* (Gerber),
xxxviii:67–77

Dreiser’s “Notes on Life”: Responses to an Impenetrable Universe (McAleer),
xxxviii:78–91

Dreiser’s Novels: The Editorial Problem (Pizer), xxxviii:[6]–24

Early Printing and Book Illustration in Spain (Chambers), xxxix:3–17

Edgar Huntly: Charles Brockden Brown’s Unsolved Murder (Bernard),
xxxiii:30–53

Editing Inquisitors’ Manuals in the Sixteenth Century: Francisco Peña and the *Directorium inquisitorum* of Nicholas Eymeric (Peters), xl:95–107

Edwin Forrest, Bibliophile (Westlake),
xxxii:[137]–147

Eiseley, Loren
Darwin, Coleridge and the Theory of Unconscious Creation, xxxi:7–22

Elias, Robert H.
Bibliography and the Biographer,
xxxviii:25–[45]

Ernest Hemingway and Owen Wister:
Finding the Lost Generation (Vorpahl), xxxvi:126–139

Evans, James E.
Fiction Rather Than Fact: A New Look at *The King of the Beggars*,
xxxvi:110–114

Eymeric, Nicholas (ca. 1320–1399)
Directorium inquisitorum, xl:95–107

Faulkner, George (1699?–1775)
Dublin Journal, xxxi:97–116

Faulkner, William (1897–1962),
xxxiv:67–77; xxxviii:147–157
Sartoris, xxxv:58–63

Faulkner’s Humor in Three Novels and One “Play” (Muchl), xxxiv:67–77

Fiction Rather Than Fact: a New Look at *The King of the Beggars* (Evans),
xxxvi:110–114

A Fifteenth-Century Spanish Book List (Dean and Armistead), xl:73–87

Fisher, Benjamin F., IV
Some Swinburne Letters,
xxxviii:140–146

To “The Assignation” from “The Visionary” and Poe’s Decade of Revising, xxxix:89–105; xl:221–251

Five Incunabula in the Biddle Law Library (Shaaber), xxxix:63–66

Flersheim, Robert G.
Nakano Family Documents: Satsuma-Chōshū Trade, xxxv:64–66

Flersheim, Robert G. (with Yoshiko Nomura)
Further Report on Tomura Documents Found Near Kanazawa,
xxxii:53–82

Florentius de Argentina (fl. 1472),
xl:62–69

The Folger Shakespeare Library—Additional Links with Philadelphia (McManaway), xxxi:23–24

Foreword to Bibliographical Studies in Honor of Rudolf Hirsch (David),
xl:9–14

Form as Seen in Two Early Works by Faulkner (Muchl), xxxviii:147–157

Forrest, Edwin (1806–1872),
xxxii:[137]–147; xxxvi:67–75

Foster, Elizabeth R.
A Library for Parliament in the Early
Seventeenth Century, xl:204–220

Four Political Satires from an 18th
Century German Manuscript
(Schmitt), xxxiii:105–116

Franklin, Benjamin (1706–1790)
Plain Truth (1747), xxxviii:2–7

Franklin and the Conspiracy of Catiline
(Brinton), xxxviii:2–7

Freehafer, John (with Anne Witmer)
Aphra Behn's Strange News from
Virginia, xxxiv:7–23

Froschauer, Christopher (ca. 1490–1564),
xl:108–117

Frye, Roland M.
The New Xerox Library of British
Renaissance Books at the University
of Pennsylvania, xxxiv:3–6

Further Report on Tomura Documents
Found Near Kanazawa (Flershem
and Nomura), xxxi:53–82

Gemmell, Robert J.
The Beckford Library Sale of 1817,
xxxvii:37–69

George Faulkner's *Dublin Journal* and
Jonathan Swift (Slepian), xxxi:97–
116

Gerber, Philip L.
Dreiser's Debt to *Jay Cooke*,
xxxviii:67–77

German MS.32: Eighteenth-Century
Ribaldry and Religion (Schmitt),
xxxvii:24–36

Gilbert, Felix
Italian Collections of Letters in the
Second Part of the Sixteenth
Century, xl:88–94

Great Britain. Parliament. Library,
xl:204–220

A Greek Evangelical Leaf with
Ecphonetic Notation (Daly),
xl:70–72

Guillelmus Brito and His Works (Daly),
xxxii:1–17

Hakutani, Yoshinobu
Theodore Dreiser's Editorial and Free-
Lance Writing, xxxvii:70–85

Hall, N. John
Letters of Thomas Adolphus Trollope
to Henry Merivale Trollope, 1882–
92, xxxix:106–124

Heine, Heinrich (1797–1856)
Der Doktor Faust, xxxii:61–73

Hemingway, Ernest (1898–1961),
xxxvi:126–139

Hirsch, Rudolf
Bibliographical Studies in Honor of
Rudolf Hirsch, edited by William
E. Miller and Thomas G. Waldman,
xl:3–145

Catalogue of Manuscripts in the Li-
braries of the University of Penn-
sylvania to 1800: Supplement A,
xxxv:3–32; xxxvi:3–36, 79–104;
xxxvii:3–23, 91–115 (Corrigenda
and Index, xxxviii:99–122)

Rosenwald Gift, xxxviii:158–159

Hirsch, Rudolf (with Adolf Klarmann)
Note on the Alma Mahler Werfel
Collection, xxxv:33–35

*The History of the Human Heart: or, The
Adventures of a Young Gentleman*
(1749), xxxi:83–90

Hoffman, Richard L.
A Newly Acquired Manuscript of
Albertano of Brescia,
xxxvi:105–109

Horne, William C.
Butler's Use of the *Rump* in *Hudibras*,
xxxvii:126–135

Incunabula at the University of Penn-
sylvania (Riley), xxxii:148–152

Index librorum prohibitorum, xxxix:67–75

Ingram, William H.
Theobald, Rowe, Jackson: Whose
Ajax? xxxi:91–96

Introductory Lectures in Nineteenth-
Century American Chemistry Courses
(Miles) xxxvii:143–150

Italian Collections of Letters in the
Second Part of the Sixteenth Century
(Gilbert), xl:88–94

Italian Plays Printed before 1701 in the University Library (Shaaber),
XL:178-203

Jackson, Mr. (dates unknown),
XXXI:91-96

Jacob Leupold and His *Theatrum Machinarum* (Rink),
XXXVIII:123-135

John Bell's Edition of Shakespeare, 1784-88 (Woodson),
XXXVIII:136-139

John Frederick Lewis, Jr. (Mills),
XXXII:79-81

Johnson, Maurice
A Comic Homunculus before *Tristram Shandy*,
XXXI:83-90
A Note on Swift's *Meditation upon a Broom-Stick* and *A Tale of a Tub*,
XXXVII:136-142

Johnson, Samuel (1709-1784),
XXXVI:115-117

Johnson to Baretti: New Evidence for the Text of 21 December 1762 (Riley),
XXXVI:115-117

Kagan, David K.
Rime di Diversi Celebri Poeti dell'Età Nostra, 1587: An Unrecorded Variant *Imprint*,
XXXIX:57-59

Katz, Joseph
Theodore Dreiser's *Ev'ry Month*,
XXXVIII:46-66
The King of the Beggars,
XXXVI:110-114

Kirk, Clara M. and Rudolf
Kirk-Howells Collection,
XXXV:67-74

Kirk, Rudolf and Clara M.
Kirk-Howells Collection,
XXXV:67-74

Kirk-Howells Collection (Rudolf and Clara M. Kirk),
XXXV:67-74

Klarmann, Adolf (with Rudolf Hirsch)
Note on the Alma Mahler Werfel Collection,
XXXV:33-35

Lea, Henry Charles (1825-1909),
XXXIII:115-118

The Lees Clock in the Rare Book Collection: An Historical Inquiry (Chasin),
XXXIV:51-61

Letters of Thomas Adolphus Trollope to Henry Merivale Trollope, 1882-92 (Hall),
XXXIX:106-124

Leupold, Jacob (1674-1727)
Theatrum machinarum (1724-1727),
XXXVIII:123-135

Levitt, Stephan H.
The Library's Indic Manuscript Collection,
XL:151-161

Lewis, John Frederick, Jr. (1899-1965),
XXXII:79-81

A Library for Parliament in the Early Seventeenth Century (Foster),
XL:204-220

The Library's Indic Manuscript Collection (Levitt),
XL:151-161

Lincoln, Abraham (1809-1865),
XXXI:120

Lippincott, Henry F., Jr.
Tate's Lear in the Nineteenth Century: Edwin Forrest's Promptbooks,
XXXVI:67-75

McAleer, John J.
Dreiser's "Notes on Life": Responses to an Impenetrable Universe,
XXXVIII:78-91

McKenzie, Alan T.
Thomas Bewick and John F. M. Dovaston: a Record of Their Friendship,
XXXIV:67-77

[McManaway, James G.]
The Folger Shakespeare Library—Additional Links with Philadelphia,
XXXI:23-24

The Making of *Beves of Hampton* (Baugh),
XL:15-37

Manuscripts and Printed Books from Six Centuries, 1000-1600: An Exhibition, February 15-April 15, 1975 (Riley),
XL:162-177

Marshall, William H.
The Byron Collection in Memory of Meyer Davis, Jr.,
XXXIII:8-29
The Byron Will of 1809,
XXXIII:97-114
Catalogue for the Sale of Byron's Books,
XXXIV:24-50
Medical Diary Reveals First Dreiser Visit

to the University of Pennsylvania (Dowell), xxxviii:92–96

Meeker, Richard K.

Bank Note, Corkscrew, Flea and Sedan: a Checklist of Eighteenth-Century Fiction, xxxv:52–57

Mencken, Henry Louis (1880–1956), xxxii:117–136

Mencken and Dreiser: An Exchange of Roles (Stoddard), xxxii:117–136

Michael Archer's *Dream of Bounden Duty* (Shaaber), xxxii:89–100

Michelangelo: see Buonarotti, Michelangelo

Miles, Wyndham D.

Introductory Lectures in Nineteenth-Century American Chemistry Courses, xxxvii:143–150

Miller, William E. (with Thomas G. Waldman), eds.

Bibliographical Studies in Honor of Rudolf Hirsch, xl:3–145

Mills, Jesse C.

The Bell without a Belfry, xxxix:34–39

The Charles Patterson Van Pelt Library Building Receives an Award, xxxi:26–27

John Frederick Lewis, Jr. (1899–1965), xxxii:79–81

Moenkemeyer, Heinz

Two Printings of the First Edition of Heinrich Heine's Dance Poem *Der Doktor Faust*, xxxii:61–73

Mortenson, Robert

Byron's Letter to Murray on *Cain*, xxxiv:94–99

"Much Virtue in If" in Shakespeare's Comedies (Murray), xxxii:31–39

Muchl, Lois

Faulkner's Humor in Three Novels and One "Play," xxxiv:67–77

Form as Seen in Two Early Works by Faulkner, xxxviii:147–157

Word Choice and Choice Words in Faulkner's *Sartoris*, xxxv:58–63

Murray, Peter B.

"Much Virtue in If" in Shakespeare's Comedies, xxxii:31–39

Nakano Family Documents: Satsuma-Chōshū Trade (Flershem), xxxv:64–66

The New Xerox Library of British Renaissance Books at the University of Pennsylvania (Frye), xxxiv:3–6

A Newly Acquired Manuscript of Albertano of Brescia (Hoffman), xxxvi:105–109

Nomura, Yoshiko (with Robert G. Flershem)

Further Report on Tomura Documents Found Near Kanazawa, xxxi:53–82

Note on the Alma Mahler Werfel Collection (Klarman and Hirsch), xxxv:33–35

A Note on Swift's *Meditation upon a Broom-Stick* and *A Tale of a Tub* (Johnson), xxxvii:136–142

Notes on Some Printing-House Practices in the Sixteenth Century (Shaaber), xl:124–139

Oberholtzer, Ellis Paxson (1868–1936)

Jay Cooke: Financier of the Civil War, xxxviii:67–77

Oldani, Louis

Bibliographical Description of Dreiser's *The "Genius,"* xxxix:40–55

Orvieto, Enzo

Un raro esemplare delle *Eseguie di Michelangelo* nella Biblioteca dell'Università di Pennsylvania, xxxix:76–80

Palu, Pierre de la

Liber Bellorum Domini, xl:38–54

Peña, Francisco, ed.

Directorium inquisitorum, xl:95–107

Pennsylvania. University.

Archives. Cochran Papers, xxxviii:160–162

Archives. Donors and Accessions, xxxviii:164; xxxix:126–128

Archives. News and Accessions, xxxix:126–128

Library. Academy Bell, xxxix:34–39

Library. Biddle Law Library. Incunabula, xxxix:63–66

Library. Exhibits. Edwin Forrest, xxxii:[137]–147

Library. Exhibits. William Carlos Williams, xxxii:74–78

Library. Exhibits. Winston Churchill, xxxi:117–119

Library. Friends of the Library. Report from the Secretary, xxxi:37; xxxii:153; xxxiii:65

Library. History. Sine Quibus Non, xxxiii:61–64

Library. Incunabula, xxxii:148–152

Library. Indic Manuscripts, xl:151–161

Library. Italian Plays before 1701, xl:178–203

Library. Lea Library. MS.45, xl:38–54

Library. Manuscripts. Catalogue. Supplement A, xxxv:3–32; xxxvi:3–36, 79–104; xxxvii:3–23, 91–115 (Corrigenda and Index, xxxviii:99–122)

Library. Rare Book Collection, xxxix:76–80

Library. Rare Book Collection. German MS.32, xxxvii:24–36

Library. Rare Book Collection. Lees Clock, xxxiv:51–61

Library. Rare Manuscripts and Printed Books, xl:162–177

Library. Van Pelt Library. Award, xxxi:26–27

Library. Xerox Collection, xxxiv:3–6

Peters, Edward M.
Editing Inquisitors' Manuals in the Sixteenth Century: Francisco Peña and the *Directorium inquisitorum* of Nicholas Eymeric, xl:95–107

Petrarca, Francesco (1304–1374), xxxiii:75–96

Pizer, Donald
Dreiser's Novels: The Editorial Problem, xxxviii:[6]–24

Poe, Edgar Allan
“The Assignation” (“The Visionary”), xxxix:89–105; xl:221–251

Potter, George R.
An Unpublished Autobiographical Letter of Henry Charles Lea, xxxiii:115–118

Zwingli and His Publisher, xi:108–117

The Pride of Shakespeare's Brutus (Rackin), xxxii:18–30

Priestley, Joseph (1733–1804), xxxvi:118–125

Principal Eighteenth-Century British Titles Included in the *Index librorum Prohibitorum* (Rogal), xxxix:67–75

The Printer of Ockam (Rhodes), xl:118–123

The Publication of *Sister Carrie*: Fact and Fiction (Salzman), xxxiii:119–133

Rackin, Phyllis
The Pride of Shakespeare's Brutus, xxxii:18–30

Rapp, Richard T.
Tuscan Diplomatic Letters: A Decipherment by Computer, xxxvi:37–46

Rare Book Collection (Westlake and Riley), xxxiii:54–60

Un raro esemplare delle *Esequie di Michelangelo* nella Biblioteca dell'Università di Pennsylvania (Orvieto), xxxix:76–80

Rhodes, Dennis E.
The Printer of Ockam, xl:118–123

Richardson, Samuel (1689–1761), xxxvi:63–66

Riley, John C.
Johnson to Baretti: New Evidence for the Text of 21 December 1762, xxxvi:115–117

Riley, Lyman W.
Incunabula at the University of Pennsylvania, xxxii:148–152

Manuscripts and Printed Books from Six Centuries, 1000–1600: An Exhibition, February 15–April 15, 1975, xl:162–177

Riley, Lyman W. (with Neda M. Westlake)
Rare Book Collection, xxxiii:54–60

Rime di Diversi Celebri Poeti dell'Età Nostra, 1587: An Unrecorded Variant Imprint (Kagan), xxxix:57–59

Rink, Evald
Jacob Leupold and His *Theatrum Machinarum*, xxxviii:123–135

Rogal, Samuel J.
Principal Eighteenth-Century British Titles Included in the *Index librorum*, xxxix:67–75

A. S. W. Rosenbach Fellowship Lectures in Bibliography, xxxviii:3–[45]

Rosenwald Gift (Hirsch), xxxviii:158–159

Rowe, Nicholas (1674–1718), xxxi:91–96

Rudolf Hirsch Bibliography ([Terrell]), xl:140–145

Rump (1662), xxxvii:126–135

Salzman, Jack
The Publication of *Sister Carrie*: Fact and Fiction, xxxiii:119–133

Sandburg, Carl (1878–1967), xl:252–256

Sanderson, James L.
Bérenger de La Tour and Sir John Davies: Two Poets Who Set the Planets Dancing, xxxvii:116–125

Schmitt, Albert R.
Four Political Satires from an 18th Century German Manuscript, xxxii:105–116

German MS.32: Eighteenth-Century Ribaldry and Religion, xxxvii:24–36

Scott, Sir Walter (1771–1832), xxxix:18–33

Shaaber, Matthias A.
Five Incunabula in the Biddle Law Library, xxxix:63–66

Italian Plays Printed before 1701 in the University Library, xl:178–203

Michael Archer's *Dream of Bounden Duty*, xxxii:89–100

Notes on Some Printing-House Practices in the Sixteenth Century, xl:124–139

Shakespeare, William (1564–1616)

Works (John Bell's edition of 1784–88), xxxviii:136–139

Comedies, xxxii:31–39

Julius Caesar, xxxii:18–30

Sonnet 73, xxxix:81–88

Sine Quibus Non. History of the University of Pennsylvania Library, xxxiii:61–64

Sir Winston Churchill: In Celebration and in Memoriam (Westlake), xxxi:117–119

Slepian, Barry
George Faulkner's *Dublin Journal* and Jonathan Swift, xxxi:97–116

A Small Find with an Interesting Result (Brainerd), xxxix:56

Some Swinburne Letters (Fisher), xxxviii:140–146

Stoddard, Donald R.
Mencken and Dreiser: An Exchange of Roles, xxxii:117–136

Strange News from Virginia (1677), xxxiv:7–23

Swift, Jonathan (1667–1745), xxxi:97–116
Meditation upon a Broom-Stick (1710), xxxvii:136–142
A Tale of a Tub, xxxvi:47–62; xxxvii:136–142

Swinburne, Algernon Charles (1837–1909), xxxviii:140–146

Tate, Nahum (1652–1715)
King Lear, xxxvi:67–75

Tate's *Lear* in the Nineteenth Century: Edwin Forrest's Promptbooks (Lippincott), xxxvi:67–75

[Terrell, Natalie D.]
Rudolf Hirsch Bibliography, xl:140–145

Theater, American, xxxii:40–60

Theobald, Lewis (1688–1744), xxxi:91–96

Theobald, Rowe, Jackson: Whose *Ajax*? (Ingram), xxxi:91–96

Theocratic History in Fourteenth-Century France: The *Liber Bellorum Domini* by Pierre de la Palu (Univer-

sity of Pennsylvania MS. Lea 45)
(Benton), xl:38–54

Theodore Dreiser Centenary,
xxxviii:3–96

Theodore Dreiser's Editorial and Free-Lance Writing (Hakutani),
xxxvii:70–85

Theodore Dreiser's *Ev'ry Month* (Katz),
xxxviii:46–66

Thomas Bewick and John F. M. Dovaston: A Record of Their Friendship (McKenzie), xxxiv:67–77

Thomas Traherne: A Chronological Bibliography, xxxv:36–51

Three Early Venetian Editions of Augustinus Datus and the Press of Florentius de Argentina (Bühler), xl:62–69

Three Kinds of Reply to *A Tale of a Tub* (Weygant), xxxvi:47–62

To "The Assination" from "The Visionary" and Poe's Decade of Revising (Fisher), xxxix:89–105; xl:221–251

Traherne, Thomas (1637–1674), xxxv:36–51

Trollope, Henry Merivale (1846–?), xxxix:106–124

Trollope, Thomas Adolphus (1810–1892), xxxix:106–124

Tuscan Diplomatic Letters: A Decipherment by Computer (Rapp), xxxvi:37–46

The Twain Are Brought Together (Deischer), xxxvi:118–125

Two Printings of the First Edition of Heinrich Heine's Dance Poem *Der Doktor Faust* (Moenkemeyer), xxxii:61–73

University Archives: Cochran Papers (Dallatt), xxxviii:160–162

An Unpublished Autobiographical Letter of Henry Charles Lea (Potter), xxxiii:115–118

An Unpublished Letter of Samuel Richardson (Benoist), xxxvi:63–66

Upon Looking into Shakespeare's Sonnet 73 (Widmann), xxxix, 81–88

Van Wyck Brooks: A Man in Quest of the Truth (Wheelock), xxxi:1–6

The Van Wyck Brooks Collection (Westlake), xxxi:25

Vorpahl, Ben M.

Ernest Hemingway and Owen Wister: Finding the Lost Generation, xxxvi:126–139

Waldman, Thomas G. (with William E. Miller), eds.

Bibliographical Studies in Honor of Rudolf Hirsch, xl:3–145

Weales, Gerald

A Wycherley Prologue, xxxii:101–104

Werfel, Alma (Schindler) Mahler, xxxv:33–35

Westlake, Neda M.

"A backward glance on my own road," xxxiv:100–102

Edwin Forrest, Bibliophile, xxxii:[137]–147

Gordon A. Block Lincoln Collection, xxxi:120

Sir Winston Churchill: In Celebration and in Memoriam, xxxi:117–119

The Van Wyck Brooks Collection, xxxi:25

William Carlos Williams: An Exhibition of a Collection, xxxii:74–78

Westlake, Neda M. (with Lyman W. Riley)

Rare Book Collection, xxxiii:54–60

Weygant, Peter S.

Three Kinds of Reply to *A Tale of a Tub*, xxxvi:47–62

Wheelock, John H.

Van Wyck Brooks: A Man in Quest of the Truth, xxxi:1–6

Whitman, Walt (1819–1892)

"A backward glance on my own road," xxxiv:100–102

Widmann, R. L.

Upon Looking into Shakespeare's Sonnet 73, xxxix:81–88

William Carlos Williams: An Exhibition of a Collection (Westlake),
xxxii:74-78

William Colenian to Thomas Philipps: On the Early 19th Century American Theater (Devlin), xxxii:40-60

William H. Marshall Memorial Collection of Nineteenth-Century English Literature, xxxiv:103

Williams, William Carlos (1883-1963),
xxxii:74-78

Wister, Owen (1860-1938),
xxxvi:126-139

Witmer, Anne (with John Frechafer) Aphra Behn's Strange News from Virginia, xxxiv:7-23

Woodson, William C.

John Bell's Edition of Shakespeare, 1784-88, xxxviii:136-139

Word Choice and Choice Words in Faulkner's *Sartoris* (Muehl), xxxv:58-63

Wrigley, John E. The Devil and Francis Petrarch, xxxiii:75-96

Wycherley, William (1640?-1716), xxxii:101-104

A Wycherley Prologue (Weales), xxxii:101-104

Zwingli, Huldreich (1484-1531), xl:108-117

Zwingli and His Publisher (Potter), xl:108-117

Donors

AMS Press, xxxiii:66

Adelman, Seymour, xxxi:28

Board of the Advancement of Literature, xxxiv:62

Albrecht, Otto E., xxxi:28; xxxi:31; xxxii:83; xxxiv:64; xxxv:76; xxxvi:139

Allen, Mrs. Hamilton, xxxiii:66

Graduates in Architecture (in memory of G. Morris Whiteside II), xxxi:30

Atkins, Kenneth R., xxxii:83

Aveney, Brian H., xxxviii:164

Banghart, Byron, xxxv:75

Winfield Bardsley Estate, xxxiii:66

Baugh, Albert C., xxxi:31; xxxii:83; xxxiii:67

Behrman, Lucy C., xxxv:76

Belgium. Ministère de l'Éducation Nationale et de la Culture, xxxi:29

Benarde, Dr. Melvin A., xxxvi:138

Benham, Sarah G., xxxv:76

Bennett, John F., xxxiv:64

Benson, Lee, xxxiv:64

Benson, Morton, xxxi:31; xxxii:83

Benton, John F., xxxi:31

Berkowitz, Sarah (in memory of David Abraham and Elizabeth Berkowitz), xxxiii:66

Walter J. Beugge Estate, xxxii:82

Bird, Robert M., xxxiii:66

Black, Matthew W., xxxii:83

Blancke, Mrs. W. W., xxxv:75

Block, Gordon A., xxxi:28; xxxi:120; xxxv:76

Gordon A. Block Estate, xxxii:82

Bloomfield, Arthur I., xxxii:83

Blyn, George, xxxii:83

Bodde, Derk, xxxi:31; xxxiii:67; xxxiv:64; xxxv:76; xxxvi:139

Boll, Theophilus E. M., xxxi:31; xxxii:83; xxxiv:64; xxxvi:139; xxxix:125

Bolles, Mrs. E. C., xxxiv:62

Estate of Mrs. Henry H. Bonnell, xxxv:76

Boymel, Mrs. Jules, xxxiv:62

Bradley, E. Sculley, xxxi:28; xxxi:31; xxxviii:164

Brady, Dorothy S., xxxii:83; xxxv:76

Branam, Alfred S., xxxiv:62

Brickman, William W., xxxii:83;

xxxiii:67; xxxiv:64; xxxv:76;
xxxvi:139; xxxvii:152; xxxviii:163,
164; xxxix:125

Bridges, Mr. and Mrs. Charles,
xxxvi:138

Briggs, Gerald, xxxviii:164

Brooks, Charles (with Mrs. Van Wyck
Brooks and Kenyon Brooks), xxxi:28

Brooks, Kenyon (with Mrs. Van Wyck
Brooks and Charles Brooks), xxxi:28

Brooks, Maria Z., xxxix:125

Brooks, Mrs. Van Wyck (with Charles
Brooks and Kenyon Brooks), xxxi:28

Brown, Mrs. Henry P., Jr., xxxi:28

Brown, W. Norman, xxxi:31;
xxxiii:67; xxxiv:64

Brownlee, R. Jean, xxxv:76

Bucharest. Biblioteca Centrala
Universitara, xxxv:75

Bucharest. University (Romanian
Embassy), xxxii:82

Bullitt, Orville H., xxxii:83; xxxiv:64;
xxxvi:138; xxxix:125

Cabell, Mrs. James Branch, xxxi:28

Cammann, Mrs. H. Schuyler, xxxv:76

Carr, William H. A., xxxix:125

Case, Lynn M., xxxviii:164

Chambers, Carl C., xxxiv:64

Chance, Britton, xxxvii:152

Clattenberg, Albert E., Jr., xxxi:30

Cochran, Thomas C., xxxviii:164

Coffin, Tristram P., xxxiv:64

Cohen, Hennig, xxxi:31; xxxii:83;
xxxiii:67; xxxv:76; xxxviii:164

Cohen, Morris, and Paul Gay, xxxii:83

Comité Permanent des Expositions du
Livre Français, Paris, xxxii:82

Conroy, F. Hilary, xxxi:31

Cope, Mrs. Thomas D., xxxiii:66

Cotter, John L., xxxiv:64; xxxv:76;
xxxvi:139

Coughlin, Robert E., xxxiii:67

Craven, Mrs. Elizabeth D. Geisler,
xxxix:125

Crawford, W. Rex, xxxi:31; xxxii:83;
xxxiv:64; xxxv:76

Daily Pennsylvanian Alumni Society,
xxxii:82

Davies, John K., xxxvii:152

Davis, Christopher, xxxiv:64

Davis, Mr. and Mrs. Meyer, xxxiii:8-29;
xxxiii:97

Davis, Patricia A., xxxii:82; xxxiv:64

de Aguiar, José, xxxi:31

Dean, Ruth J., xxxvi:139; xxxvii:152

Dechert, Robert, Esq., xxxi:28;
xxxii:83; xxxiv:64; xxxv:76;
xxxvi:139; xxxvii:152; xxxviii:164;
xxxix:125

De Gennaro, Richard, xxxviii:164;
xxxix:125

Deischer, Claude K., xxxii:83;
xxxiv:64; xxxviii:64; xxxix:125

In Memory of Joseph C. Didinger,
xxxiv:62

Direccion General de Estadistica,
Mexico, xxxvii:151

Drinker, Mr. and Mrs. Henry S.,
xxxi:30

Drinker, Mrs. Henry S., xxxii:82;
xxxiii:66

Dripps, Robert D., xxxix:125

Dunlop, Robert G., xxxix:125

Dunn, Richard S., xxxvii:152

Dupont, Ernest, xxxi:28

Earle, Peter G., xxxiv:64

Eiseley, Loren C., xxxi:31; xxxii:82;
xxxiii:67; xxxvii:152

Eldridge, Richard B., xxxi:28

Farrell, James T., xxxv:76

Fast, Howard, xxxiv:62; xxxv:76

Faul, Henry, xxxiv:64; xxxv:76;
xxxvii:152; xxxviii:164; xxxix:125

Feinstone, Sol, xxxviii:163

Ferris, Richard, xxxi:29

Finkelstein, Dr. Marie, xxxiii:66

Consulate General of Finland, xxxiv:62

Fischer, Mrs. Joy M. (in memory of
Albert I. Fischer), xxxiii:66

Fisher, Benjamin F., IV, xxxv:76

Flower, Elizabeth F., xxxii:83;
xxxiii:67; xxxiv:64; xxxv:76

Fogg, John M., Jr., xxxiv:64

Follett Publishing Co., xxxiii:66

Foster, Richard W., xxxi:29; xxxvi:138; xxxvii:151; xxxix:125
Foster, William, xxxvi:138
Burt Franklin, Publisher, xxxii:82
Fuhrman, J. M., xxxv:75
Furber, Holden, xxxix:125
Galey, William T., Jr., xxxii:82
Garber, Lee O., xxxii:83
Gay, Paul, and Morris Cohen, xxxii:83
Gellman, Aaron, xxxvii:152
Giergiewicz, Mieczyslaw, xxxiv:64
Goldstein, Kenneth S., xxxvi:139; xxxvii:152
Goodenough, Ward H., xxxvi:139
Green, Otis H., xxxii:83
Griffin, Cynthia, xxxii:83; xxxiv:64
Dr. Julius Grodinsky Estate, xxxiii:66
Grossman, Dr. and Mrs. Louis, xxxviii:163
Gulbenkian (Calouste) Foundation, International Department, xxxii:82
Gutkind, Gabriele, xxxvii:151
Hanaway, William L., Jr., xxxviii:164
Hargadon, Francis, xxxiv:64
Harnwell, Gaylord P., xxxii:83; xxxiii:67
Harnwell, Mrs. Gaylord P., xxxi:29
Harris, Zellig S., xxxiii:67
Hartwell, Robert M., xxxvi:139
Harvey, Van A., xxxvii:152
Hatch, Benton L., xxxiv:63
Haviland, Thomas P., xxxvi:138
Henry, Mrs. Robert, xxxviii:163
Hirsch, Rudolf, xxxi:31; xxxii:83; xxxiii:67
Hoffman, Michael J., xxxiv:64
Hoffman, Richard L., xxxiv:64
Holmsley, Mrs. Natica, xxxi:30
Hornberger, Theodore, xxxviii:164
Hudson, H. Lea, xxxv:75
Hudson, Mrs. Lea, xxxii:82
Hudson, W. R., xxxi:30
Humphrey, Arthur E., xxxii:83
Hutchinson, Edward P., xxxv:76
Hyde, Frederic G., xxxi:31
Ingersoll, R. Sturgis, xxxviii:164
Isard, Dr. Walter, xxxii:83
Jacob, Philip E., xxxiv:64
Jacobson, Benjamin H., xxxii:83
James, Martha W., xxxi:31
Jameson, Michael H., xxxii:83; xxxix:125
Estate of Waldemar Jansen, xxxiv:63
Jockers, Mrs. Paula, xxxiv:63
Jones, Frederick L., xxxi:31
Kanazawa-Pennsylvania Affiliation Committee, xxxv:75
Kanes, Mr. and Mrs. David, xxxviii:163
Kanes, Mrs. David (in memory of Edward H. Wannemacher), xxxiii:66
Kaplan, Mrs. Ruth, xxxii:83
Kelley, William T., xxxi:31
Kelly, Dr. J. A., Sr., xxxv:75
Kingsley, Mrs. John D., xxxviii:163
Kirk, Clara M. and Rudolf, xxxi:29; xxxv:67-74
Kirk, Rudolf and Clara M., xxxi:29; xxxv:67-74
Klarmann, Adolf, xxxi:31; xxxii:83; xxxiii:67; xxxiv:64; xxxv:76; xxxvi:139; xxxviii:164; xxxix:125
Klarinann, Mrs. Adolf, xxxv:75
Kling, Dr. Blair B., xxxiv:63
Koch, Mrs. Lucy, and Herman Liveright, xxxi:29
Koppelman-Ackerman, Mrs. Ann, xxxvi:138
Koston, Paul, xxxiv:63
Kraft, Robert A., xxxiv:64; xxxvi:139; xxxviii:164
Kramrisch, Stella, xxxiii:67
Krasnoff, Dr. and Mrs. Sidney, xxxviii:163
Krogman, Wilton N., xxxiv:64
Krol, His Eminence John J., Cardinal Archbishop of Philadelphia, xxxii:83
Krumbhaar, Mrs. Edward B., xxxv:76
Kumaraswami Raja, N., xxxvi:139
Lamont, Austin, xxxiii:67
Langman, Mrs. Ida, xxxi:31; xxxii:83
Lavin, David E., xxxiv:64
Lavinskas, Frank, xxxi:30
Law, Mrs. Margaret Lathrop, xxxiv:63

Laws, G. Malcolm, Jr., xxxviii:164
Leach, MacEdward, xxxi:31; xxxiii:67
Lee, Chong-Sik, xxxi:31; xxxv:76
Lefton, Mrs. A. Paul, Sr., xxxv:75
Levine, Herbert, xxxi:31
Lewis, John F., Jr., xxxii:79-81
Liveright, Herman, and Mrs. Lucy Koch, xxxi:29
Lloyd, Paul M., xxxix:125
Loucks, William N., xxxii:83
Loucks, William N., and William G. Whitney, xxxvi:139
Lumiansky, Robert M., xxxii:83; xxxv:76

McClanahan, Mrs. William, xxxv:75
McGill, Dan M., xxxvii:152
McHale, Vincent E., xxxvii:152; xxxviii:164; xxxix:125
Maciunas, Vincas, xxxiii:67; xxxv:76; xxxvi:139; xxxviii:164
Mahler, Anna, xxxviii:163
Maimon, Elaine and Morton (in memory of Miss Barbara Marshall and Professor William Marshall), xxxv:75
Maimon, Morton and Elaine (in memory of Miss Barbara Marshall and Professor William Marshall), xxxv:75
Mangione, Jerre, xxxi:31
Manwaring, Stanley, xxxviii:164
Marriner, Dr. Guy, xxxvii:151
Marshall, William H., xxxi:31; xxxiii:67
Martin, Mrs. Briton, Jr., xxxiv:63; xxxvi:138
Martin, Thomas S., III, xxxi:29
Meyerhoff, Howard A., xxxii:83; xxxiii:67; xxxiv:64
Miller, Mrs. Arlene, xxxi:30
Miller, George L., xxxix:125
Miller, William E., xxxv:76
Mills, Jesse C., xxxii:83
Moenkemeyer, Heinz, xxxi:31; xxxii:83; xxxiii:67; xxxiv:64; xxxv:76; xxxvi:139; xxxvii:152; xxxviii:164; xxxix:125
Mordell, Maurice, xxxv:75
Morris, Catharine, and Sydney L. Wright, xxxvi:138
Morris, Clarence, xxxvii:152
Morris, Mrs. Mary E. F., xxxiii:66
Morrow, Glenn R., xxxii:83; xxxix:125
Mountbatten, Lord Louis, xxxviii:163
Mudd, Emily H., xxxix:125
Muhlenberg, Charles H., xxxiv:63
Mumford, Lewis, xxxv:76
Murray, Donald S., xxxvii:152
Myers, Cyril B., xxxix:125

Thomas Nelson & Sons, xxxiii:66
By Students and Friends in Memory of Dr. J. P. Nettl, xxxv:75
Newbold, Mrs. Fitz Eugene, xxxi:29
Newton, Robert P., xxxiii:67
Nichols, Jeannette P., xxxiv:64; xxxv:76; xxxviii:164
Nichols, Roy F., xxxiii:67; xxxiv:64; xxxv:76
Nijenhuis, Albert, xxxv:75; xxxvii:152
Noble, Mrs. Elsa, xxxviii:160
Nolan, Margaret, xxxiii:67
Nordell, Philip G., xxxiii:66
Norris, Dr. George W., xxxi:29; xxxii:83

Odlozilik, Otakar, xxxi:31; xxxii:83; xxxiii:67; xxxiv:64; xxxv:76; xxxvi:139; xxxvii:152; xxxviii:164
Oliver, Covey T., Esq., xxxiv:64
Ostrauskas, Kostas, xxxi:31

Palmer, Norman D., xxxviii:164; xxxix:125
Paprotta, Wiltruda, xxxii:83
Parker, Edward J., xxxii:83
Patterson, Ernest M., xxxi:31
Pazuniak, Natalia, xxxvi:139
Peckham, Morse, xxxiii:67
Peltz, Dr. William L., xxxi:30
Pemberton, Henry R., xxxviii:160
Pennsylvania. University. Classics Department, xxxiv:63
Pennsylvania. University. Library. Friends of the Library, xxxviii:160
Pennsylvania. University. Library. Staff (in memory of Lilian Guthrie), xxxii:83

Pennsylvania. University. University of Pennsylvania Press, *xxxiv*:63

Perkins, G. Holmes, *xxxii*:30; *xxxii*:83; *xxxiv*:64

Perley, Mrs. George, *xxxi*:30

Perot, William Hannis, *xxxvii*:151

Philadelphia. Free Library of Philadelphia, *xxxv*:75

Philadelphia Zionist Organization, *xxxvii*:151

Plimpton, Harriet, *xxxii*:83; *xxxvi*:138

Pollak, Otto, *xxxvi*:139

Potter, George R., *xxxv*:76

Potter, Joy M., *xxxv*:76

Potts, Edgar L., *xxxii*:31

Estate of Edgar L. Potts, *xxxvi*:138

Pratt, Robert A., *xxxv*:76; *xxxvi*:139

Primakoff, Henry, *xxxii*:83; *xxxiii*:67; *xxxv*:76

Quinn, Kathleen, *xxxii*:83

Raker, Charles W., *xxxiii*:67

Ravdin, Dr. I. S. and Elizabeth, *xxxv*:76

Reichenberger, Arnold G., *xxxii*:83; *xxxv*:76; *xxxvi*:139; *xxxviii*:164; *xxxix*:125

Reiner, Thomas A., *xxxii*:83

Riasanovsky, Alexander V., *xxxiii*:66

Richards, Dr. Alfred N., *xxxii*:31

Richardson, Mrs. Delphine O., *xxxii*:31; *xxxvii*:152; *xxxviii*:164

Rickett, Adele A., *xxxvii*:152

Rickett, W. Allyn, *xxxiii*:67

Rieber, Alfred C., *xxxiii*:67

Riley, Lyman W., *xxxvi*:139; *xxxvii*:152; *xxxviii*:164

Rin, Dan S., *xxxiv*:64

Rin, Shifra, *xxxv*:76; *xxxvi*:139; *xxxviii*:164

Rin, Svi, *xxxviii*:164

Roach, William, *xxxii*:31; *xxxiii*:67; *xxxiv*:64; *xxxv*:76; *xxxvi*:139

Robb, David M., *xxxiv*:64

Rochberg, Mr. and Mrs. George, *xxxiii*:66

Rosenberg, Charles E., *xxxii*:31; *xxxiii*:67; *xxxiv*:64; *xxxv*:76; *xxxvi*:139; *xxxvii*:152; *xxxviii*:164; *xxxix*:125

Rosengarten, Adolf G., Jr., *xxxii*:83; *xxxiv*:64

Rosengarten, Frederic, Jr., *xxxvi*:138

Lessing J. and Edith Rosenwald Foundation, *xxxviii*:158-159

Rudolph, L. C., *xxxvi*:139

Ryals, Clyde de L., *xxxv*:76

Sack, Saul, *xxxii*:31

St. Martin's Press (in memory of Robert Ockene), *xxxvi*:138

Saul, Dr. George Brandon, *xxxvi*:138; *xxxvii*:151

Saunders, E. Dale, *xxxii*:31; *xxxii*:83; *xxxiii*:67; *xxxiv*:64; *xxxv*:76; *xxxvi*:139; *xxxix*:125

Estate of Katharine M. Schmucker, *xxxiv*:63

Schofer, Lawrence, *xxxvii*:152

Schoolfield, George C., *xxxiv*:64; *xxxv*:76; *xxxvi*:139

Schwartz, Richard F., *xxxii*:31; *xxxii*:84; *xxxviii*:164

Scott, Senator Hugh D., *xxxiv*:63; *xxxv*:76

Seeley, Frank F., *xxxv*:76

Segal, Bernard G., *xxxv*:76; *xxxvi*:139; *xxxvii*:152; *xxxviii*:164; *xxxix*:125

Seldes, George, *xxxvii*:151

Sellin, Thorsten, *xxxii*:31; *xxxii*:84; *xxxiii*:67; *xxxiv*:64; *xxxvi*:139

Seltzer, Robert, *xxxvi*:139

Setton, Kenneth M., *xxxii*:84

Sevag, Dr. M. G., *xxxii*:31

Shaaber, Matthias A., *xxxii*:84; *xxxiv*:64; *xxxvii*:152

Shen, Benjamin S. P., *xxxviii*:164

Shinn, M. Elizabeth, *xxxii*:31; *xxxiii*:67; *xxxiv*:64

Shover, John L., *xxxvi*:139; *xxxviii*:164; *xxxix*:125

Shryock, Richard, *xxxvi*:139

Shryock, Mrs. Richard, *xxxviii*:163

Estate of A. Carson Simpson, *xxxv*:63

Singher, Mr. and Mrs. Martial, *xxxv*:76

Slovak Academy of Sciences, Institute of Musicology, *xxxiv*:63

Smedick, Lois K., *xxxii*:30

Smith, Dr. Robert C., *xxxviii*:163

Snell, John L., Jr., xxxv:76
Snodgrass, Mrs. L. E., xxxv:76
E. A. Speiser Collection, xxxiii:67
Spiller, Robert E., xxxi:29, 31;
 xxxii:84; xxxiii:67; xxxv:76;
 xxxvi:139; xxxvii:152; xxxix:125
Springer, Otto, xxxii:84
Steiner, Paul E., xxxiii:67
Stephens, William E., xxxi:31
Stern, Mrs. Horace, xxxvi:138
Stevenson, John R. (in honor of Dr. John
 A. Stevenson), xxxiv:101–102
Swearer, Donald K., xxxvii:152
Sweeten, E. Craig, xxxii:84

Tarnawsky, Marta, xxxvi:139
Taylor, George W., xxxvii:152
Terry, Dr. Luther L., xxxiv:64; xxxv:76
Thackray, Arnold W., xxxvii:152;
 xxxviii:164
Thayer, Charles W., xxxix:125
Tomazinis, Anthony R., xxxv:76
Trumbauer, Walter H., xxxi:29;
 xxxii:83
Tucker, Chester E., xxxii:84
Rosemond Tuve Estate, xxxii:83

Ufford, Charles W., xxxi:31

Virginia. Medical College of Virginia,
 xxxii:29
Viteles, Morris S., xxxiv:64; xxxv:76;
 xxxvi:139; xxxvii:152
Vogdes, Joseph T. (on behalf of Brann &
 Stuart Co., Trenton, N.J.), xxxi:30
von Gronicka, André, xxxviii:164
von Neumann, Nicholas A., xxxi:30

Wagner, Paul, Esq., xxxii:83

In Memory of William C. Walther,
 xxxiii:67
Way, Henry A., Jr., xxxiv:64
Weales, Gerald, xxxiii:67; xxxv:76;
 xxxix:125
Weaver, W. Wallace, xxxvi:139
Webster, Paul F., xxxviii:163
Welch, Claude, xxxiii:67
Wells, Henry, xxxiv:64; xxxvi:139;
 xxxviii:164; xxxix:125
Werfel, Alma Mahler, xxxv:33–35
Whelan, Dr. Stephen T., xxxviii:163
Wherry, Edgar T., xxxiv:64;
 xxxvii:152
Whitaker, Arthur P., xxxi:31; xxxii:84;
 xxxvi:139
Whitney, Vincent H., xxxvi:139
Whitney, William G., and William N.
 Loucks, xxxvi:139
Whittlesey, Charles R., xxxvi:139
Wiedman, William, xxxii:83
Williams, Dorothea H., xxxiii:67;
 xxxiv:64
Williams, Edgar I., xxxii:83
Williams, Mrs. William Carlos,
 xxxii:74–78
Winn, Willis J., xxxii:84
Estate of Owen Wister, xxxvi:138
Wolfgang, Marvin E., xxxi:31
Wolman, Dr. Irving J., xxxi:31
Wright, Sydney L., and Catharine
 Morris, xxxvi:138

Yamada, Hisao, xxxiv:64
Yoder, Don, xxxiii:67; xxxvii:152

Zigrosser, Carl, xxxix:125

